

## COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

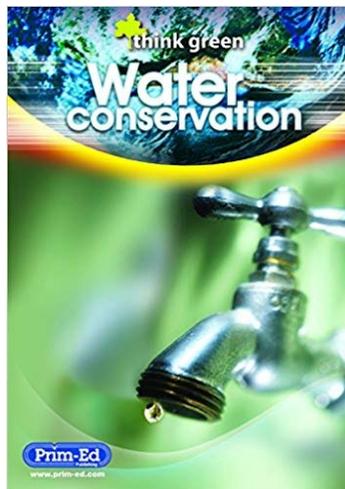
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*Water conservation.* (2010). Greenwood, W.A: R.I.C. Publications Pty Ltd.

# Water Contaminants

Things that mix with water and make it unhealthy for drinking are known as *water contaminants*. Contaminated water is also known as *dirty water*. There are different types of water contaminants. They can be naturally occurring organisms or materials, or human-made chemicals. Contaminated water is a major cause of sickness and death for people.

## Microbes

*Microbes* are living biological contaminants. They are very tiny organisms. Organisms such as bacteria, fungi and viruses are microbes. Microbes can cause diseases. Microbes get into water through sewage and animal waste. The following are some water contaminant microbes:

- *Faecal coliforms* and *E. coli* bacteria that live in human and animal faecal waste, contaminate water. Contact can cause diarrhoea, cramps, nausea and headaches.
- *Turbidity* is the contamination of water due to sediment from soil runoff. Turbid water often contains harmful bacteria and viruses that can cause nausea, cramps, diarrhoea and headaches.
- *Giardia lamblia* is a type of bacteria that contaminates lakes and river water. It causes illnesses such as giardiasis diarrhoea, vomiting and cramps.

