

Water pollution is the contamination of water bodies such as lakes, rivers, oceans, and groundwater which results due to natural or human activities. Water pollution results in the physical, chemical or biological change in water quality. These changes have a harmful effect on living organisms and make water undesirable for suitable use. The table below enlists anthropogenic causes and effects of water pollution.



Category	Examples	Source	Harmful effects
Infectious Agents	Bacteria, viruses, protozoa, parasitic worms	Human and animal waste	Disease (Cholera, Gastroenteritis, Hepatitis, etc)
Organic waste	Animal manure, plant debris	Sewage, animal feedlots	Large population of bacteria decomposing these wastes can degrade water quality by depleting dissolved oxygen present in water and result in the death of aquatic organisms (fish, etc) dependant on dissolved oxygen
Inorganic chemical	Water soluble acids, compound of – Lead and Arsenic Salts such as NaCl in ocean water	Surface runoff, industrial effluents and household cleansers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make freshwater unfit for drinking or irrigation - Cause skin cancer and crippling damage to spinal cord and neck - Damage the nervous system, liver, kidney - Harm fish and other aquatic life, lower crop yield, accelerate corrosion of metals exposed to such water
Organic chemicals	Oil, gasoline, plastics, pesticides, cleaning solvents, detergents	Industrial effluents, household cleansers, surface runoff from fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cause nervous system damage - Reproductive disorder and some cancers - Harm fish and wildlife
Plant nutrients	Water soluble compounds containing nitrate, phosphate, ammonium ions	Sewage, manure, runoff of agricultural fertilizers and pesticides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cause excessive growth of algae resulting in eutrophication of water bodies - Drinking water with excessive levels of nitrates lowers oxygen carrying capacity of the blood and can kill infants and unborn children resulting in a disease called methaemoglobinemia.
Sediments	Soil and salt	Land erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make water turbid and reduce photosynthesis - Disrupts aquatic food web - Carry pesticides, bacteria, and other harmful substances into water bodies - Affect feeding and spawning grounds of fish - clog and fill lakes, artificial reservoirs, stream channels and harbours
Radio active materials	Isotopes of iodine, uranium and thorium	Nuclear power plant, mining and processing of uranium and other	- Genetic mutations, miscarriages, birth defects and certain cancers
Thermal Pollution	Excessive heat Cold water	Coolant waters from power plants and other industries. cold bottom water from deep-water reservoirs behind large dams	<p>Lowers dissolved oxygen levels and makes aquatic organisms more vulnerable to disease, parasites, and toxics chemicals.</p> <p>Affects fish, particularly eggs and larvae, macro invertebrates and the overall productivity of water bodies.</p>