

Ice is NOT a problem in Congo!

“Hold the Ice” says an Indianapolis TV Station after it discovers at one of every three restaurants checked, the ice contained more bacteria than toilet water.

By Woody M. Collins



Local health officials say it (the WTHR 13 Investigates reporting) shows improper practices at local eateries that could make you sick. What? Do you need to boil your water like I do while in Congo? Also, do I need close my mouth while taking a shower? OK, I am ready to institute my Congo-water safety procedures here in Indianapolis. I could not wait to review the report.

In January, WTHR collected samples of ice from 25 local eateries and bars. They sent the samples to a certified lab for analysis. The lab found 13 of 25 bars and restaurants tested, at least one ice sample tested positive for the presence of coliform bacteria. State and federal regulations has a zero-tolerance for coliform bacteria because certain kinds of it can make you sick. The presence of it in water (or ice) suggests the water is vulnerable to contamination from an outside source since public water systems around Indianapolis treat water with chlorine to kill all coliform bacteria.

How does this compare to Congo? The standards for drinking water in Congo and the United States do not compare. Unfortunately, you may have a hard time finding a drinking water standard in the Congo. Certainly, compliance is non-existent. The water and the ice, if it was available, pose a treat to everyone. The water likely contains more bacterial, parasitic, and viral infections that routinely cause sickness and even death. In developing countries like

Congo, four-fifths of all the illness is caused by water-borne diseases, with diarrhea being the leading cause of childhood death.

Lubumbashi is experiencing an outbreak of cholera. It is the capital of southeastern province of Katanga, the rich mining area of Congo but with poor water and sanitation. Cholera is a water-borne bacterial disease. It is a disease of the poor and poverty-ridden people. Over 2,000 cases of Cholera were reported in January. If untreated, 50 to 70 percent of the cases result in death. The confirmed death toll stands at only 59 persons due to medical intervention by Doctors without Borders. Every year more than 3.4 million people die as a result of water related diseases, making it the leading cause of disease and death around the world. Most of the victims are young children.

Safe drinking water is possible in Congo. However, the water must come from properly constructed and maintained water well. A single water well can provide safe drinking water for thousands of people. Bio-sand filters can provide individual families safe drinking water where a water wells are not feasible or practical. Safe drinking water would save lives and reduce sicknesses from water-borne diseases.

You are blessed because you can drink your tap water here in the United States without the fear of getting sick or die. However, you can decide yourself whether you want to "hold the ice" or not.

For questions or comments, please contact Woody Collins via phone (317) 698-7643, via email at WMCollins@CongoHelpingHands.org, via my blog at http://woodycollins.typepad.com/ending_extreme_poverty_in/.