

In Kericho County, many families have poor access to improved water and sanitation facilities, particularly in rural areas, which are not linked to the formal sewerage systems and piped water.

This poses a serious risk as families have to make do with water that may be contaminated as they tap into unprotected sources, and especially if they consume the water without any treatment at home. A recent study sought to establish the effects of poor sanitation on public health, the environment and well-being in Kericho County. **What do the findings show?**

## Key contributors to diarrhoea in children in Kericho County

- Poor disposal of faecal matter leading to contamination of the environment
- Households' use of potentially contaminated sources of drinking water
- Caregivers' poor sanitation and hygiene habits



**Sanitation-related illnesses are the most common ailments in the households interviewed.**

**19%** of survey households had a family member who had sought treatment for typhoid in the previous six months.

**20.4%** of households who had a child suffering diarrhoea (cases) had a family member who had been treated for typhoid in the six months before survey, compared to **17%** of households whose child did not.



**Although most households use piped water, some are using sources that may be easily contaminated, leading to diarrhoea.**

**38%** of households in which a child had diarrhoea use water from unimproved sources, compared to **36%** of households in which the child did not have diarrhoea.



**Caregivers' exposure to sanitation messages appears to contribute to reduced risk of diarrhoea in a child.**

**64.5%** of caregivers of the children who did not have diarrhoea had heard messages on sanitation and hygiene in the past 12 months, compared to **54%** of those in the other group.



**Poor disposal of faecal matter contributes to contamination of the environment and water sources.**

**29%** of faecal matter in Kericho county is unsafely disposed of and may end up in the environment. *E. coli* bacteria was found in the public water points tested.

**54%** of households interviewed do not treat their drinking water at all.



**Caregivers' poor hand-washing habits may be contributing to the risk of diarrhoea in children.**

**50%** of caregivers in the households in which a child had diarrhoea reported washing hands using soap and water, far fewer than in the households without a child with diarrhoea (**60%**)

**43%** respondents in the households where a child had diarrhoea used only water to wash their hands after using the toilet, compared to **35%** in the other group.

## Recommendations:

To address this situation, Kericho County Government should:

- Improve access to safe water: the county needs to improve faecal sludge management and mobilise communities to build and use improved toilets
- Take action to discourage open defecation
- Conduct public education campaigns to address personal and household sanitation and hygiene, to reduce contamination of water and the environment
- Allocate adequate resources to sanitation programmes.

## For more information on these findings, see report:

*Understanding the Effects of Poor Sanitation on Public Health, the Environment and Well-being – Kericho County. 2018.* Report of Research Findings published by the V4CP programme.

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