Simple Steps to Protect Your Drinking Water

Your everyday activities can help protect the water we drink.

Properly dispose of the following:

- Chemical cleaners
- Motor oil
- Batteries

For more information on how to properly dispose of household hazardous waste items, contact: **resourcerecovery@allegancounty.org** or call **269-686-4559**

Limit the use of pesticides and fertilizer.

- Follow manufacturer instructions

Test and maintain your septic system.

- Pump your tank every 3 to 5 years
    - Contact a licensed septage hauler

Watch what you flush.

These are some of the items that are harmful to your septic system:

- "Flushable wipes"
- Feminine hygiene products
- Grease

Improper use, installation or maintenance of your septic system can impact groundwater and surface water quality.

For More Resources Scan the QR Codes Below

Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Drinking Water Lab
https://bit.ly/4l8hQP7

Allegan County Health Department Groundwater Education Webpage
https://bit.ly/4ceSLy8

Water Systems Council Well Owner Information
https://bit.ly/watersystemscouncil

ALLEGAN COUNTY · 1835 · MICHIGAN
HEALTH Department

Your Water, Your Health: Understanding Groundwater

What Is Groundwater?

Groundwater is water stored in underground rocks and soil, replenished by rain or surface water. It's a vital source of fresh water for drinking and irrigation.

Groundwater's Path to the Tap

- Over 90% of the drinking water in Allegan County comes from groundwater.
- There are more than 15,144 wells in Allegan County.
- Most wells in Allegan County are used for domestic water supply; as of August 2020, 86% of the wells were classified as "household wells."

What Is an Aquifer?

Aquifers are made up of gravel, sand, sandstone, or fractured rock (e.g., limestone).

- They are underground layers that hold water.
- Water moves through these materials due to interconnected spaces.
- Groundwater flow speed depends on the size and connection of these spaces.

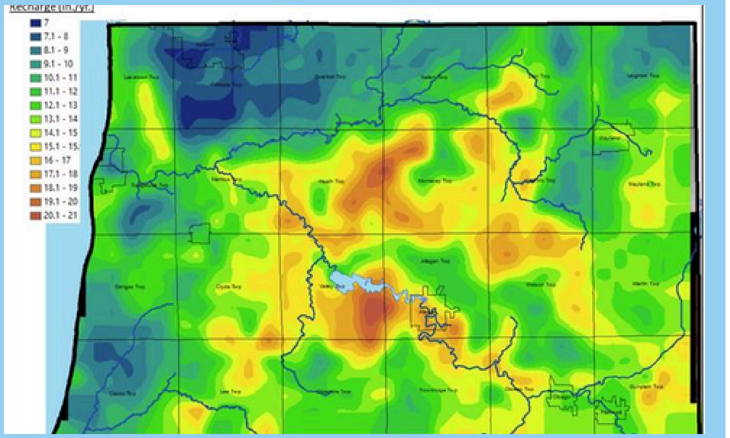
Aquifer Recharge and Discharge

Aquifers are recharged and discharged through natural processes:

- **Recharge**: Water from rain, snowmelt, or surface water infiltrates the ground, replenishing the aquifer.
- **Discharge**: Groundwater flows to the surface through springs, wetlands, or seepage into rivers, or is pumped out by wells.

Water reserves are finite, and overuse can lead to shortages. Everyone relies on the same aquifers, so water usage in one area can affect neighboring regions.

Groundwater Recharge Map



Groundwater recharge is highest in the orange areas and lower in the blue areas.

How Do Contaminants Get Into Groundwater?

- Contaminants can enter drinking water from chemicals, motor oil, batteries, pesticides, or waste disposed of on the ground or in lakes and rivers.
- Some contaminants, like salt, iron, and arsenic, occur naturally.
- Some contaminants can easily move through the ground into groundwater used for public or private wells.
- Once in groundwater, contaminants are difficult, expensive, and sometimes impossible to remove.

Testing Your Water

If you have a well, testing your water is very important. To get a sampling kit sent to you, scan the first QR code on the back of the brochure.

Every year test your water for:

- Coliform Bacteria
- E. coli
- Nitrate
- Nitrite

Every 3 to five years test for:

- Arsenic
- Copper
- Lead

If you are on a municipal water supply, stay educated and up to date by reading the annual reports produced by the municipality.