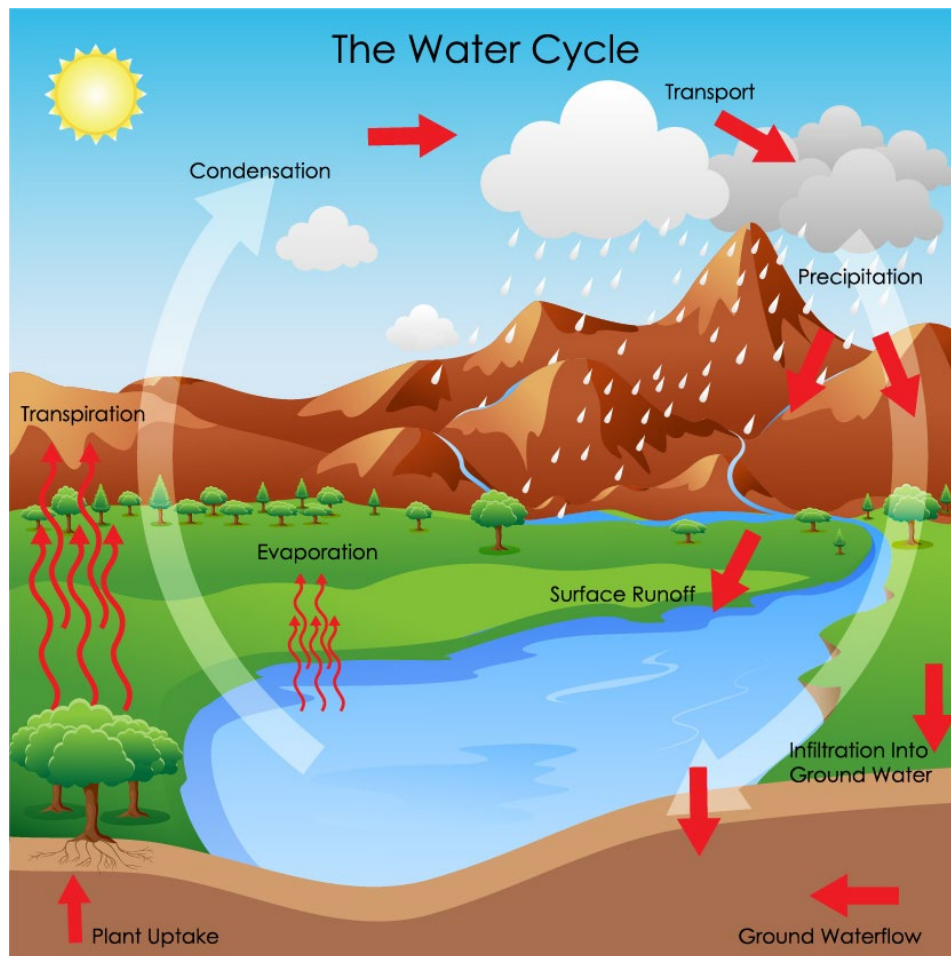


# WHERE YOUR WATER COMES FROM

## What is Groundwater?

Groundwater, which accounts for 30 percent of the world's fresh water, occurs below the ground, where it is filtered naturally as it passes through layers of the earth. Groundwater is stored in aquifers – layers of soil, sand and rocks – but can come to the surface naturally through a spring or brought to the surface through a well. An estimated 23 million U.S. households depend on individual wells for their drinking water (according to the U.S. EPA).

Water on the earth is constantly moving. The water cycle, pictured below, describes the continuous movement of water on, above and below the surface of the Earth. Water can change states (liquid, vapor and ice) at various stages of the water cycle.



When water falls as rain, hail or snow, some of it collects as surface water. The rest seeps into the earth to become groundwater. Groundwater flows slowly underground and emerges again as surface water. Evaporation of surface water takes place, and the cycle starts again.

## Steps You Should Take to Protect Your Groundwater and Well Water

- Maintain your well. See our [wellcare®](#) information sheet on [Well Maintenance](#).
- Keep household chemicals and paint away from your well and dispose of them properly. Take used motor oil to a recycling center.
- Limit your use of pesticides and fertilizers.
- Install a well cap and keep it clear of leaves, mulch, dirt, snow, and other materials.
- Be careful when you mow around your well, so you don't damage the well casing.
- And remember... even though your well can meet all the water needs of a modern household, it is important to conserve water to protect the nation's groundwater resources.

## More Information on Groundwater

Your licensed well contractor, health department, cooperative extension service, and state environmental or natural resources agency can provide you with more information about groundwater in your area. For help locating these agencies, contact the [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) Hotline at 888-395-1033 or visit our website at [wellcarehotline.org](https://www.wellcarehotline.org).



## Information to help maintain and protect your water well system:

[wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) is a program of the [Water Systems Council \(WSC\)](https://www.watersystemscouncil.org). WSC is the only national organization solely focused on protecting the health and water supply of an estimated 23 million households nationwide who depend on private wells (according to the U.S. EPA).

This publication is one of more than 100 [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) information sheets available FREE at [www.watersystemscouncil.org](https://www.watersystemscouncil.org).

Well owners and others with questions about wells and well water can contact the [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) Hotline at 1-888-395-1033 or visit [www.wellcarehotline.org](https://www.wellcarehotline.org) to fill out a contact form or chat with us live!

## JOIN THE WELLCARE® WELL OWNERS NETWORK!

By joining the FREE [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) Well Owners Network, you will receive regular information on how to maintain your well and protect your well water.

Contact us at 1-888-395-1033 or visit [www.wellcarehotline.org](https://www.wellcarehotline.org) to join!