

Source Water Protection

What is Source Water?

The drinking water that comes from your faucet may be from ground water or surface water or both. The water- in the aquifer, river, stream, or lake- where your drinking water comes from is called 'source water.'

Why Should I Protect It?

Source water is vulnerable to contamination. If the drinking water source is not protected, contamination of the 'source water' can be dangerous to those who rely on it to drink. Cleaning up contamination or finding a new source of drinking water can be difficult, expensive, and sometimes impossible.

Threats to source water:

- ◆ **Microbial Contaminants** (think bacteria and viruses, the same agents that can cause colds and flu) originate from farming and livestock operations, septic systems and sewage treatment plants
- ◆ **Inorganic Contaminants** including salts (like the road salt used to melt ice in the winter) and metals that come from farming, mining, and stormwater runoff
- ◆ **Pesticides and herbicides** from residential or industrial use
- ◆ **Organic Chemical Compounds** from industry sources
- ◆ **Radioactive contaminants** from mining or oil and gas production



*We never know the
worth of water 'til the well
is dry.*

-English proverb

What Can I Do to Protect My Source Water?

- ◆ Find out where your source water is located (your drinking water supplier will know) and put up signs in the area to **notify the public that pollution in the area will contaminate drinking water supplies.**
- ◆ Use and dispose of harmful materials properly. This means **no dumping of hazardous materials on the ground!** Dumping things like weed killer, motor oil, bug killer, or even a number of medicines or household cleaners on the ground (or down the drain) can result in contamination of source water.
- ◆ **Don't overuse pesticides, fertilizers or herbicides.** Many non-hazardous options exist for growing bigger vegetables, prettier flowers, or for keeping bugs out of your houseplants!
- ◆ Design a Storm Drain Stenciling Project. By stenciling a message like "**Don't Dump Waste: Drains to River!**" near the storm drains in your community (please call your municipality for permission first!) you can draw attention to protecting our source water.
- ◆ With the help of your local government, **organize a hazardous waste cleanup/drop-off in your community.** Hazardous waste cleanups allow for hazardous wastes to be recycled or disposed of properly, rather than disposing of them where they may contaminate source water.

Cleaning the Kitchen

Here are some tips for replacing cleaners that threaten our source water with non-toxic ones:

White Vinegar cuts grease, removes mildew and some odors, and removes wax buildup

- ◆ Vinegar or club soda make great window cleaners!
- ◆ For furniture polish, mix one part vinegar with three parts olive oil

Baking Soda cleans, deodorizes and scours

- ◆ Pour some baking soda into a drain or a toilet. Add some vinegar, and watch as their bubbling action cleans!
- ◆ Baking Soda is also perfect for removing the grime that builds up around the stove



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PO Box 408 Melcroft PA 15462 724.455.4200 phone www.mtwatershed.com

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