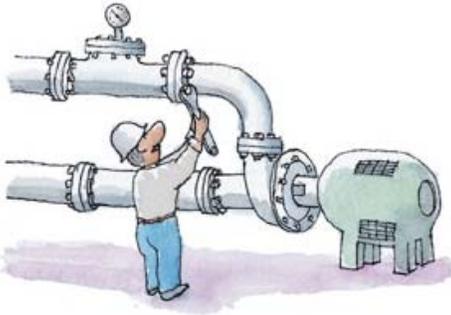


Hey Kids... Author T. Waterman answers your questions about WATER...

Q: How important are our ground water resources?

A: Ground water, which is stored in *aquifers* below the surface of the Earth, is one of the Nation's most important natural resources. Ground water is currently the source for almost 100 percent of the water used in neighborhoods in north Harris County. That will change in 2010, however, when 20 percent of our drinking water will come from surface water resources, such as a river, lake, or reservoir.



Q: Where does our household water come from?

A: Water is piped to most area homes by a municipal utility district (MUD), or by the city in which they live. In some cases, families obtain their drinking water from their own private water well.

Q: How is water delivered to our homes?

A: Many years ago when everyone lived in rural areas, they would have to get their own water from rivers or from local wells. Today, since most people in the U.S. live in towns and cities, and communities, we rely on an organized system of pipelines, water pumping stations, and water tanks and water towers to deliver our drinking water.



Q: How much water does the average person use at home per day?

A: Estimates vary, but each person uses about 80-100 gallons of water per day. The largest use of household water is in the bathroom -- to flush the toilet, and for showers and baths. That is why, in these days of water conservation, toilets and showerheads that use less water than before are becoming more important. Texas now has laws that specify that toilets may use only a specific number of gallons for each flush.



Q: Does a little leak in my house really waste water?

A: It's not the little leak that wastes water -- it is the little leak that keeps on leaking that wastes water. And the fact is that little leaks often get ignored-- and continue to leak again another day. So, how can a little leak turn into a big waste? Many of our toilets have a constant leak -- somewhere around 22 gallons per

day. This translates into about 8,000 gallons per year of wasted water, water that could be saved.

Or what if you have a leaky water line coming into your house. If it leaks 1 gallon of water every 10 minutes that means that you are losing (and paying for) 144 gallons per day, or 52,560 gallons per year.

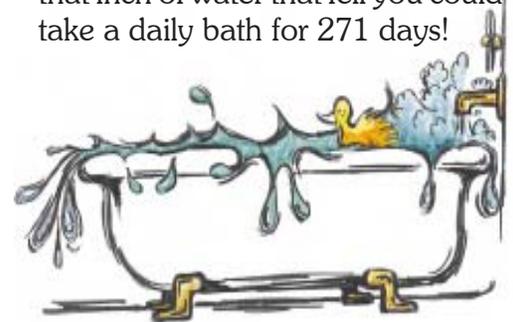


Q: How does our swimming pool stay so clean?

A: It is not an easy task to keep a swimming pool so clear and clean. If you just set a pan of water outdoors in the middle of summer, you'll see that it ends up containing gunk very quickly. Swimming pool water is continuously pumped through a filter to trap particles, like all those bugs that fall in. To keep algae and dangerous bacteria from growing, chemicals such as chlorine are added. Chlorine is also added to your drinking water to keep those bacteria out of your stomach.

Q: How many baths could I get from a good rainstorm?

A: Let's imagine that your house sits on a one-half acre lot. And let's say you get a storm that drops 1 inch of rain -- that amounts to about 13,577 gallons of water on your yard. A big bath holds about 50 gallons of water, so if you could save that inch of water that fell you could take a daily bath for 271 days!



Source: USGS Water Science for Schools