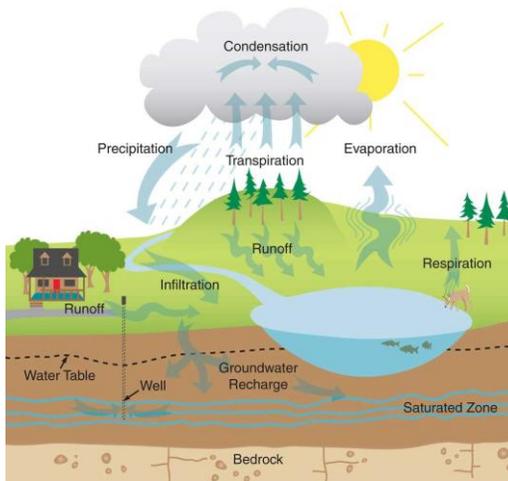


Your water travels quite a distance before it gets to your home or school for daily use. After falling as precipitation, it collects either underground, as **groundwater** or above ground as **surface water**.

- **Groundwater** – Water stored underground in Aquifers. Aquifers are underground layers of soil and rock that are saturated with water. Aquifers collect water by rainfall that soaks slowly through the soil. This process is called infiltration. Water is then pumped to the surface through wells and treated for use.
- **Surface Water** - water stored in streams, ponds, lakes, or rivers.

The Water Cycle



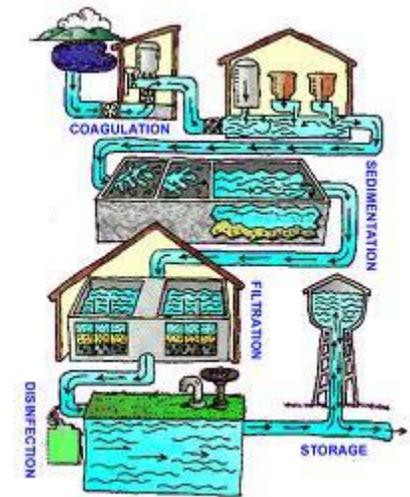
water.EPA.gov

- **Evaporation** - The sun heats water in oceans and other large bodies of water turning water into water vapor (We can see it as steam)
- **Transpiration** – plants release the water they use into the air
- **Condensation** - When water vapor cools it forms clouds and then changes back into a liquid
- **Precipitation** – form of water that falls from the sky (rain or snow)
- **Runoff** – water that moves across the surface (lawn, road) before entering a surface water body

How Does My Water Get Clean?

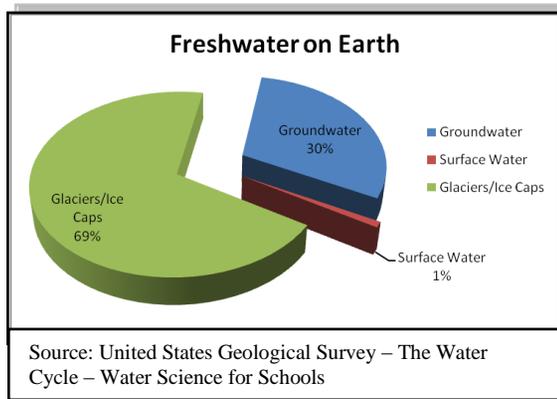
Your water arrives at your tap after a lengthy trip. Water is pumped from underground or from a lake or stream to the treatment plant. At the treatment plant it is treated to make it safe to drink.

- **Coagulation** - Substances are added to make dirt and large particles clump together.



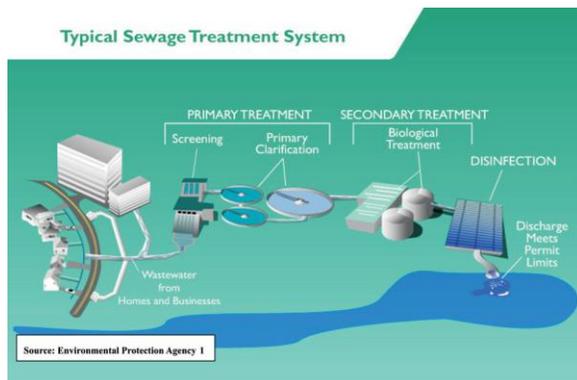
water.EPA.gov

- **Sedimentation** -The clumps then sink to the bottom for collection while the clean water flows on.
- **Filtration** - layers of sand, gravel, charcoal or fiber are used to remove small particles.



Where Does Our Used Water Go?

After water goes down our drains and toilets, it works its way through an underground network of pipes to a wastewater treatment plant. The plant separates out sand, grit, and larger solids through screens, settling tanks, and skimming devices. Heavier particles settle to the bottom and lighter particles are skimmed from the top. The water is then mixed with tiny organisms that “eat” any remaining particles. Any remaining bacteria are then removed from the wastewater. The water is then released into our lakes or rivers. Once the water is released, it re-enters the Water Cycle.



Where Does My Water Come From?

Helping Iowa Water and Wastewater Utilities Educate Communities



Iowa Rural Water Association
4221 S. 22nd Ave East
Newton, IA 50208
1-800-747-7782