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Residents urged to protect groundwater

Stanton- Groundwater is something we all tend to take for granted. We turn on the faucet and assume the water will flow steady and free from contaminants. But did you know that we are all responsible for maintaining the quality and quantity of our groundwater?

Why should you care about groundwater? For starters, 95 percent of all available freshwater comes from aquifers underground. Not only that, most surface water bodies are connected to groundwater, so how you impact groundwater matters. Furthermore, many public water systems draw all or part of their supply from groundwater, so protecting the resource protects the public water supply and impacts treatment costs. If you own a well, groundwater protection is especially important. As a well owner, you are the manager of your own water system. Protecting groundwater will help reduce risks to your water supply.

There are two fundamental categories of groundwater protection: keeping it safe from contamination and using it wisely by not wasting it. When it comes to naturally occurring contamination (microorganisms, heavy metals, etc.), it is up to private well owners to make sure their water is safe. This can be accomplished by having an annual well checkup in the spring by a qualified well contractor before the peak water use season begins. It is also a good idea to have your well water tested whenever there is a change in taste, odor, or appearance, or when the system is serviced. Human activities can also pollute groundwater. Some common human causes of groundwater contamination include:

- Improper storage or disposal of hazardous substances
- Improper use of fertilizers, animal manures, herbicides, insecticides, and pesticides
- Chemical spills
- Improperly built and/or maintained septic systems
- Improperly abandoned wells
- Poorly sited or constructed water wells

When it comes to water conservation we all need to do our part. Americans use 79.6 billion gallons of water per day- the equivalent of 2,923 12-oz. cans for every man, woman, and child in the nation.

At the household level, the greatest amount of water is used in the bathroom, followed by clothes washing and kitchen use. Small measures, such as repairing dripping faucets and turning the faucet off while brushing your teeth, can go a long way in conserving water. To calculate your household water use and to find out how to modify your water usage, visit www.ngwa.org.

The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) urges you to begin doing your part to protect one of our most important natural resources- groundwater!

MMDHD recommends that well owners:

- Keep hazardous substances, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides, and motor oil far away from your well.

- Use hazardous substances according to manufacturer's recommendations, store them properly in a secure place, and dispose of them safely.
- Maintain proper separation between your well and buildings, waste systems, and chemical storage areas.
- Periodically check the well cover or well cap on top of the casing (well) to ensure it is in good repair and securely attached. Its seal should keep out insects and rodents.
- Keep your well records in a safe place. These include the construction report, and annual water well system maintenance and water testing results.

For more information, visit www.ngwa.org or contact MMDHD at
Clinton- 989-224-2195
Gratiot- 989-875-3681
Montcalm- 989-831-5237

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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