

## Long Island's Drinking Water Source: Our Aquifers

Long Island gets its drinking water from underground aquifers - unconsolidated layers of sand and gravel saturated with water. Our drinking water is pumped to the surface from wells drilled into the aquifers.

There are three aquifers under Long Island: the Upper Glacial aquifer, the Magothy aquifer and the Lloyd aquifer. In most places, the Upper Glacial aquifer is too polluted to use.

Most Long islanders get their water from the Magothy aquifer which lies 200 to 800 feet below the surface. **This source must be protected.**

Cesspools and poorly maintained septic systems discharge human waste pollutants, including nitrogen and pathogens, into the ground where they seep into aquifers. **Nitrogen from human waste is a significant groundwater pollution problem.**

Where groundwater mixes with surface waters, the nitrogen can also pollute these areas, causing harmful algae blooms and leading to closed beaches and shellfish beds.

Only properly functioning septic systems and state-of-the-art sewer systems with effective wastewater treatment plants can reduce this significant pollution source.

Over-pumping or excessive water use during summer months can lead to salt water intrusion in water supply wells, forcing them to be closed permanently.

## Jump In and Help Protect Our Water!

*We drink our groundwater.*

*We swim, boat and fish in our surface waters.*

- 1. If you have a septic system, have it checked and pumped regularly.**
- 2. Don't put hazardous chemicals down the drain.**
- 3. Stop using pesticides and high-nitrogen fertilizers on your lawn.**
- 4. Don't flush pharmaceuticals down the toilet.**
- 5. Don't let your pets contribute to pollution.**
- 6. Conserve water around the house.**
  - Don't leave the water running while brushing your teeth or washing dishes
  - Only run the clothes washer and dishwasher when they are full
  - Reduce shower time to five minutes or less
  - Cut your grass at 3 inches or higher to reduce the need for water.
  - Adjust sprinkler systems to deliver only 1 inch of water per week, and water early in the day.
  - Purchase water-saving EPA-certified "Water Sense" plumbing fixtures when building or renovating

Jump In!



**For more information  
about protecting our  
water here on Long  
Island please visit  
LIWater.org.**