Water Quality Guidelines for A & B

Point and nonpoint pollution are impacting Antigua and Barbuda's freshwater and near shore marine water. Such pollution is adversely affecting drinking water supplies, recreational waters and ecosystem survival. In this regard, there is a need to safeguard the public and meet the needs of water for agriculture, fisheries and arecreational activities.

Water quality varies from place to place, depending on the condition of the source water from which it is drawn.

How much do you know about your source?

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What contaminants may be found in drinking water?

There is no such thing as naturally pure water. In nature, all water contains some impurties. As water flows in streams, sits in lakes, and filters through layers of soil and rock in the ground, it dissolves or absorbs the substances that it touches. Some of these substances are harmless. In fact, some people prefer mineral water precisely because minerals give it an appealing taste. However, certain levels, minerals, just like man-made chemicals are, considered contaminants that can make water unpalatable or even unsafe.

Some contaminants come from erosion of natural rock formations. Other contaminants are substances discharged from factories, applied to farmlands, or used by consumers in their homes and yards. Sources of contaminants might be in your neighborhood or might be miles away. Your Environmental Health Division can let you know the level of any contaminants that may be found.

Where does drinking water come from?

A clean, constant supply of drinking water is essential to every community. People frequently drink water that comes from surface water sources such as lakes, rivers, and reservoirs. Sometimes those sources are close to the community. Our water is used for three main purposes: agriculture, industry, and domestic uses.

- Agricultural uses of water primarily include irrigation and, to a lesser extent, livestock maintenance.
- Domestic uses include drinking water plus water withdrawn for homes, commercial establishments, and public services (e.g. hospitals)
- Industrial uses include machiner and other like equipment, producing energy, cleaning and washing goods produces as ingredients in manufactured items, and solvents.

Desalinated Water Production is the major source of water production in our country. This process is the removal of salt from saline waters (usually seawater) using a variety of techniques including reverse osmosis.

WATER GOES WITH THE FLOW...

Raise your hand if you live in a watershed! Do you all have your hands raised? Great! Because we all live in a watershed. No matter whether you live in a city or the country, our land is sloping toward the sea. This means that water is always trying to flow downhill to the sea. Gravity at work!! The next time you are standing next to a stream, think about whatzzup-stream.

Has this water flowed past another neighborhood like yours? A forest? A farm?

When water falls as rain, it quickly runs together into small streams. Eventually these small streams flow into each other and form rivers. Rivers, in turn, meet to form larger rivers.

Pick out any location in any stream and all the land that contributes water up to that point is called its *drainage basin or watershed*. Knowing where your water comes from is important, especially if problems occur upstream. You probably would not want to head out to your favorite bech if that morning a gasoline freighter spilled some of its load upstream.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS?

People who have HIV/AIDS, are undergoiong chemotherapy, take steroids, or for another reason have a weakened immune system may be more susceptible to microbial contaminants, that may be found in your drinking water. Young children are particularly susceptible to the effects of high levels of contaminants, including nitrate andlead. To avoid exposure to lead. If you have any concerns speak with your doctor or contact the Environmental Health Division for more information.

Follow that Stream! And after your walk...how healthy are your waters?

