

UNDERGROUND WATERS: POLLUTION

Groundwater tends to be sweet and potable:

NATURAL CAUSES:

The pollutants reach the aquifer due to human activities such as:

- Construction of septic tanks
- Farming.

The contamination may be due to:

- Natural factors, if the aquifers are too rich in dissolved salts
- For the natural erosion of certain rock formations.

Groundwater contamination can remain for long periods of time. This is due to :

- Low renewal rate
- Long residence time

ANTHROPOGENIC CAUSES:

Among the anthropogenic causes (due to humans) due to the contamination are:

- Infiltration of nitrates and other highly soluble chemical fertilizers used in agriculture.
- Factory discharges
- Agricultural and chemical products used by people in their homes and yards.

- **Water storage tanks, septic tanks, places with hazardous waste and landfills.**

Currently, the groundwater contaminants that matter most are:

- **Organic industrial compounds, such as solvents, pesticides, paints, varnishes, or**
- **Fuels like gasoline.**

Mineral chemical fertilizers, nitrates are the ones that cause the greatest concern. Nitrate poisoning is dangerous in children. At high levels they can limit the ability of blood to carry oxygen, causing suffocation in babies.

Groundwater in coastal areas can be contaminated by:

- **Intrusions of seawater (Saline intrusion) when the extraction rate is very high.**

This causes seawater to enter freshwater aquifers

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