# Cross Connections and Your Health

## Your water could be in immediate jeopardy!

### What is a cross connection or backflow?

Backflow is the reversal of normal flow in a system due to backsiphonage or backpressure.

Backsiphonage backflow occurs when a vacuum is induced on a piping system, just like drinking through a straw. A garden hose or a hose connected to a laundry tub can act as a "straw," allowing undesirable liquids to be drawn through it by backsiphonage.

### What hazards threaten the homeowner?

Many common household uses for water pose a public health threat to the potable water supply system whether the home is supplied by municipal water or by a private well.

- A hose connection to a chemical solution aspirator to fed lawn/ shrub herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers.
- Lawn irrigation systems.
- Water softeners.
- Hose connections to a laundry tub.
- Swimming Pools.

This list of potential cross connection hazards is by no means complete. A private residence that has one or two of these situations is seriously jeopardizing its own potable water system and that of the community if it is served by a public water supply system.

**Historically, cross connections have been one of the most serious public health threats to a drinking water supply system, and many times are present in residential water systems.**

**Backflow is EASY to prevent, and YOU are responsible!**

### Call for help and more information:

**Idaho Rural Water Association**
(208) 343-7001

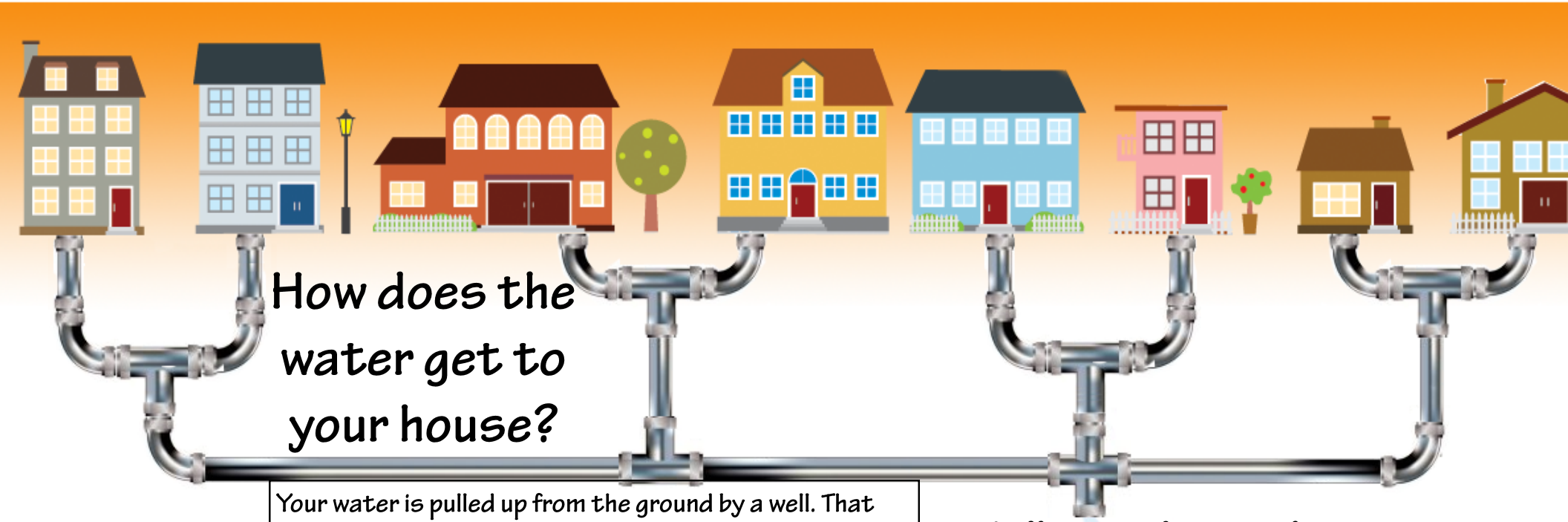
**Idaho DEQ Water Quality**
(208) 373-0502

**EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline**
1-800-426-4791

IRWA Commitment to Quality

Quality On Tap! Our Commitment Our Profession

# KEEPING OUR DRINKING WATER SAFE



## How does the water get to your house?

Your water is pulled up from the ground by a well. That well pumps the water to a treatment plant that sends the water to your house.

## Where does the water go when it leaves your house?

After going down the drain, your water turns in to "wastewater". It flows through the pipes to your community wastewater treatment facility where it is cleaned and put back into the ground.

## How do we know water is safe to take from the ground?

Your drinking water is tested before it reaches your home. You can also help keep it safe by not dumping toxic chemicals like oil and gas onto the ground. Everything that is put on the ground can get washed into drains or dirt by rain, or seep down into the soil. Your community has to work together to make sure its water is safe and clean.

### Tips to keep your ground water clean!

- Check your car for oil leaks!
- Don't over apply lawn fertilizer; follow the instructions for your size of lawn.
- Use Household Hazardous Waste collections Sites to dispose of used fluorescent light bulbs, motor oil, batteries, and more!
- Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle!

Find out if your community has a Source Water Protection Plan to help keep your drinking water safe! Contact your City Hall or Public Works Department for more information.