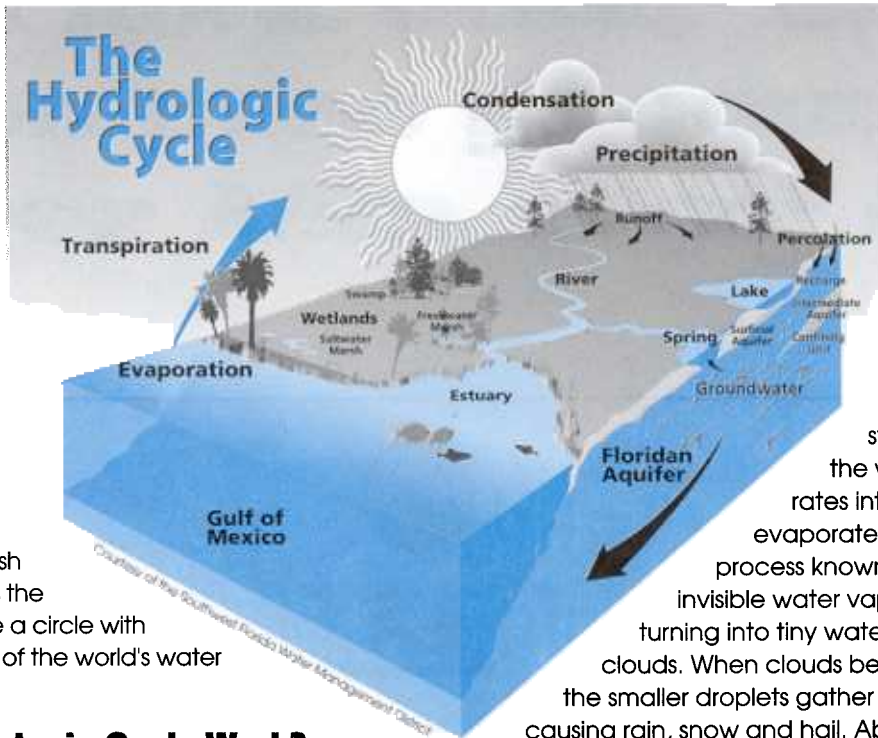


**Besides your eyes, what
do you have in common
with your great, great
grandmother?**

You're drinking the same water.

Did you know that all of the water on earth today has been here for a very long time? It was here when your great, great grandmother was a little girl. It was here during the Revolutionary War and even as far back as the dinosaur age. And it will be here for a long time to come. As a matter of fact, it is part of an unending natural process where the sun, the earth's surface, precipitation, evaporation and transpiration all work together to supply us with fresh water. This process, known as the hydrologic cycle, is much like a circle with no beginning or end, and all of the world's water is part of this cycle.



All of the world's water, however, regardless of its form or whether it is visible or invisible, remains constantly within the hydrologic cycle. As it moves through the cycle, water changes form and may, at any time, be a liquid, a vapor or a solid. As the sun heats lakes, streams, rivers or oceans, the warmed water evaporates into the air. Water also evaporates from plant leaves, a process known as transpiration. As this invisible water vapor rises, it condenses, turning into tiny water droplets that form clouds. When clouds become heavy with water, the smaller droplets gather to form larger drops, causing rain, snow and hail. About one-third of our rainfall seeps into the ground becoming groundwater. Precipitation that runs into streams, lakes and oceans evaporates, beginning the cycle again.

How Does the Hydrologic Cycle Work?

More than two-thirds of our planet is covered with water. Nearly 98 percent is saltwater, and the remaining two percent is freshwater found in lakes, streams, rivers, ponds, glaciers and icebergs. Even rain, snow, sleet, hail, mist and clouds fall into that two percent. Another source of freshwater we can't even see is water hidden in soil, plants, humans and animals, or stored underground in rocks and caverns. It may also be vaporized in the air.

Water is one of nature's resources we can't manufacture. Whether your drinking water comes from a river, lake or the Floridan Aquifer, we are all dependent on the hydrologic cycle. Understanding the finite world of water helps us realize just how precious our water resources really are.