Where does my drinking water come from?

The drinking water that is supplied to our homes comes from either surface water or ground water. Surface water collects in streams, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. Ground water is water located below the ground where it collects in pores and spaces within rocks and in underground aquifers. We obtain ground water by drilling wells and pumping it to the surface.

Public water systems provide water from surface and ground water for public use. Water treatment systems are either government or privately-held facilities. Surface water systems withdraw water from the source, treat it, and deliver it to our homes. Ground water systems also withdraw and deliver water, but they do not always treat it. A private well uses ground water as its water source. Owners of private wells and other individual water systems are responsible for ensuring that their water is safe from contaminants.

What type of health issues can be related to water quality?

The presence of certain contaminants in our water can lead to health issues, including gastrointestinal illnesses, reproductive problems, and neurological disorders. Infants, young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and immunocompromised persons may be especially at risk for becoming ill after drinking contaminated water. For example, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children.

Mosul dam engineers warn it could collapse at any time, killing one million people due to poor maintenance

The Mosul dam in northern Iraq, holds back more than 11bn cubic meters of water from the Tigris River. Iraqi engineers involved in building the dam 30 years ago have warned that the risk of its imminent collapse and the consequent death toll could be even worse than reported.

They pointed out that pressure on the dam’s compromised structure was building up rapidly as winter snows melted and more water flowed into the reservoir, bringing it up to its maximum capacity, while the sluice gates normally used to relieve that pressure were jammed shut. The Iraqi engineers also said the failure to replace machinery or assemble a full workforce more than a year after Islamic State temporarily held the dam means that the chasms in the porous rock under the dam were getting bigger and more dangerous every day.

The engineers warned that potential loss of life from a sudden catastrophic collapse of the Mosul dam could be even greater than the 500,000 officially estimated, as they said many people could die in the resulting mass panic, with a 20-metre-high flood wave hitting the city of Mosul and then rolling on down the Tigris valley through Tikrit and Samarra to Baghdad.

Source: The Guardian & Daily mail.