

# Water Quality Tips Around the House

## In the Bathroom

### The Sink

- Repair leaky faucets and always turn off your taps tightly so they don't drip. Even a small drip can waste tons of water.
- Use an aerator and a water-flow reducer attachment.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth or washing your hands.

### DID YOU KNOW?

A tap leaking one drop of water per second wastes more than 25 L of water a day!  
That's 9,000 L a year!

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### Shower /Tub:

- Repair leaky faucets and always turn off your taps tightly so they don't drip.
- Have showers instead of baths and keep them short (5 minutes).
- Install low-flow showerheads.

### DID YOU KNOW?

A five-minute shower with a standard showerhead uses 100 L of water.  
A five-minute shower with a low-flow showerhead uses 35 L of water.

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### Toilet:

- Repair any toilet tank, bowl or base leaks. You can check the tank for leaks by adding food colouring to the water tank and observing whether it spreads to the bowl without flushing.
- Never flush garbage of any kind down the toilet.
- Install a low-flush toilet (that uses 6 litres or less per flush), or place a toilet insert or weighted plastic bottle filled with water in the water tank.

### DID YOU KNOW?

About 75% of indoor home water use occurs in our bathrooms, and toilets are the single largest water users. Toilets use over 40% more water than needed!

## **In the Kitchen**

### **Sink:**

- Repair leaky faucets and always turn off your taps tightly so they don't drip. Even a small drip can waste tons of water.
- Use an aerator and a water-flow reducer attachment.
- Don't run the water continuously while thawing food, hand washing dishes or while washing fruits and veggies; use a partially filled sink instead with a quick rinse afterward.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Only 10% of our home water supply is used in the kitchen and as drinking water but a whopping 65% of it is used in the bathroom.

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### **Dishwasher:**

- Wash full loads and use the shortest cycle.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

An automatic dishwasher uses 40 L of water, compared to dishwashing by hand, which uses about 35 L.

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### **Fridge:**

- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator, instead of running the tap for a cold glass of water.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Water makes up 70% of the human body. Each day we must replace 2.4 L of water, some through drinking water & the rest through food (all foods contain water!).

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Less than 3% of the water produced at a large municipal water treatment plant is used for drinking purposes.

## **In the Laundry Room**

### **Sink:**

- Repair leaky faucets and always turn off your taps tightly so they don't drip. Even a small drip can waste tons of water.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The laundry room accounts for 20% of household water use.

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### **Washing Machine:**

- Wash full loads and use the shortest cycle.
- Adjust the water level and use cold or warm water instead of hot.
- Use environmentally friendly (low or no phosphate and biodegradable) detergents.
- Repair any leaks around the washer taps and hoses.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

A traditional washing machine uses 130 to 250 L of water to launder a large load.

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## **In the Yard and Garden**

### **Tap/hose:**

- Check outside hoses, faucets and sprinklers for leaks. Even a small drip can waste tons of water.
- Take care of your garden hoses. Don't keep them in the sun or drag them across the driveway.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Practice wise water use! In the summer, lawn and gardening watering can increase the demand for water by more than 50%.

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### **Rain Barrel:**

- Collect rainwater from the eaves of your house in a large garbage pail or rain barrel. Make your own rain barrel!

Go to <http://www.gardengatemagazine.com/tips/40tip11.html> to find out how.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Watering the lawn thoroughly once per week makes better use of our water than watering it every day.

**Lawn & Sidewalk:**

- If you water your lawn, do it in the cool morning to avoid evaporation and be careful not to water the pavement.
- Clean sidewalks and driveways with a broom, not with water from a hose. Using a broom instead of the hose saves about 200L of water...each time!
- Use a rain gauge (or simply a can) to measure natural rainfall and your lawn watering. Lawns can stay healthy with only 2 - 5 cm of water per week.
- Do not water your lawn on windy days and do not turn on sprinklers for the entire day.
- Keep your grass about 6 cm long because taller grass holds water better.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

One lawn sprinkler spraying 19 L per minute uses 50% more water in just 1 hour than a combination of 10 toilet-flushes, two 5-minute showers, two dishwasher loads and a full load of clothes!

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**Garden:**

- Plant trees, shrubs, herbs and flowers that are native and generally require less care and water.
- Water the roots not the leaves and use compost and mulch.
- Consider replacing grass with drought-resistant plants—the more plants the better, as vegetation reduces run-off.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

During the summer, about half of all treated water is sprayed onto lawns and gardens.

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**Cars and bikes:**

- Use a bucket of water to wash your bike or car, then rinse quickly using a trigger nozzle on your hose.
- Wash the family car over grass or gravel to prevent any soapy runoff from going directly into the sewers.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Using a bucket of water to clean the car instead of the hose saves about 300 L of water...each time!

**Sewer grates:**

- Never throw garbage, oil or chemicals down your toilets, sink drains, the storm drain or onto the ground. Improper disposal leads to contamination of our local creeks, streams, lakes and soil. Take your hazardous waste to your local waste management facility.
- Paint yellow fish on storm drains, to remind everyone that what goes down our drains ends up in our water systems. For more information about this activity, go to [www.earthwater-stencils.com](http://www.earthwater-stencils.com).

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Dumping household cleaners, pesticides, oil, gasoline, etc. down the toilet, drain or storm sewer pollutes aquatic ecosystems and harms every creature that depends on them (including humans).

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**In the Bedroom****Potted plants:**

- Water your indoor plants with water from a rain barrel.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Plants are an active part of the water cycle—they release moisture from the surface of their leaves to the air through transpiration.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Ice floats because as water freezes, it becomes lighter (less dense) than liquid water. If ice did not float, lakes would freeze from the bottom up, freezing/killing all the plants and fish as well. But the ice on top keeps the water underneath protected from the cold. It is like a blanket that keeps the water at a safe temperature for the living things in the lake.