

Water: Have We Lots for the Future?



With the demand for water already exceeding supply, over one billion people worldwide do not have access to safe drinking water. Climate change and rising populations are putting increased pressure on existing supplies.

Since water is required at all stages of a product's life cycle, we must recognize our responsibility to help conserve supplies. Water is essential in everything we do, drinking, cooking, growing our food and preserving our way of life.

We need to become more aware of the growing pressure on Canada's fresh water supply and encourage Canadians to use less of it.

Get Involved – Start Saving Water Today

Water is essential. We use it to cook, to clean and to keep our lawns and gardens green. It is in the products we use and we use it for many different purposes each day. That adds up to a lot of water and it is surprising how much of it is wasted unnecessarily. Thankfully there are small steps each of us can take to use water more wisely, both inside and outside our home. In fact by following the three rules of water conservation – reduce, repair, and retrofit – we can cut our water use in half.

Kitchen

10% of the water we use is in the kitchen. By making a few small changes to your cooking, cleaning, washing, and drinking habits you can significantly reduce your water use.

1. Washing half loads in the dishwasher wastes water. Waiting until it's full before running it will save up to 10,000 liters of water a year. To further cut your water use, choose the short cycle or install a high efficiency model.
2. Do not let the water run while you are cleaning fruits and vegetables. Washing them in a partially filled sink instead saves up to 5 liters of water each time.
3. Installing a low flow aerator which adds air to your water stream on your kitchen tap can reduce your water consumption by as much as 50%.
4. Always turn taps off tightly so they do not drip and if you do find a leak repair it promptly. One leak can waste several thousand liters of water per year.
5. When washing dishes by hand never run water continuously. Instead, wash dishes in a partially filled sink and then rinse them in a separate sink or bowl or by using the spray attachment on your tap.
6. When boiling vegetables, you can save water by using just enough water to cover them and putting a tightly fitting lid on the pot. Using a microwave to cook vegetables uses even less water.
7. Keep bottle of drinking water in your refrigerator rather than running your tap until the water gets cool. Remember to rinse container and renew the water every two to three days.

8. Do not defrost foods under running water. To save water use a microwave to thaw things or plan ahead and use a refrigerator instead.
9. Check your water heater to make sure the thermostat is not set too high. Water is wasted when you add cold water to cool hot water.
10. Instead of letting water run down the drain while you wait for it to heat up, collect it in a jug or bowl and use it to water plants or wash fruits and vegetables.

Laundry Room

Doing laundry accounts for approximately 20% of the water we consume at home. There are many easy steps you can take in the laundry room to cut down the amount of water you use.

1. Doing many small loads of laundry wastes water. By washing only full loads, the average family could save 2,000 liters of water a month, as well as a lot of energy.
2. Adjusting the water level on your washing machine to match the size of your load will save a lot of water that would normally have been wasted.
3. Installing a high-efficiency washing machine will save almost 96 liters of water per load, making it one of the most effective ways you can reduce your water usage.
4. Use the sud-saving feature on your washing machine, if you have one, to save water by recycling the rinse water from the last load.
5. Switching to concentrated liquid laundry detergent, conserves water in the manufacturing process. This creates less packaging waste and uses less energy during the manufacturing process.
6. Locate your master water shut off valve. That way if a pipe bursts in your home, you will be able to shut it off quickly and will not waste water.
7. Promptly repair the leaks around the taps, hoses, and fittings of your washer. Even if you have to pay a plumber to fix a leak you will still save money and water in the long run.
8. When replacing a washing machine consider purchasing a front loading model. Front loading washers use less water than top loading washers do.
9. When shopping, try to avoid buying clothing with labels that say "Wash Separately", since extra water and energy is required to maintain these garments.
10. When washing clothing by hand, put a plug in the drain and use the minimum amount of water necessary, rather than letting the tap run continuously.

Bathroom

About 65% of our total indoor water use occurs in our bathrooms. Toilets are the single greatest water users. Making small changes in your bathroom habits can reduce your water use sustainability.

1. The average 15 minute shower uses about 300 liters of water. Cutting your shower time in half could save up to 300 bath tubs of water a year.
2. Installing a low-flow showerhead will conserve water by at least 25%. A family of four could save more than an average swimming pool or water a year.
3. Promptly repair any leaks in and or around your taps. One drop per second waster approximately 10,000 liters if water a year. Most leaks are simple and inexpensive to fix.
4. Turing off the tap while you brush your teeth will save up to 8 liters of water a minute. To save even more water, install a low flow aerator on your tap.
5. When washing or shaving, partially fill the sink and use that water rather than running the tap continuously. This conserves about 60% of the water normally used. Use short bursts of water to clean razors.
6. Placing a weighted plastic bottle filled with water in your toilet tank will reduce water usage by about 20%. Toilet tank “inserts”, available at most plumbing and hardware stores are low-cost alternative.
7. Why flush something so precious down the drain? Installing low flush toilets that use 6 liters or less per flush can reduce you water usage by 40 to 50%.
8. Check for leaks in your toilet tank fittings by putting a small amount of food coloring into the tank. Wait 15 minutes, it the color has spread to the bowl without flushing you have a leak that needs repairing.
9. Ensure that the float ball in your toilet tank is properly adjusted so that the water level does not exceed the height of the overflow tube. Also check the plunge ball and flapper valve to make sure they are properly seated. If you need help, call a plumber.
10. If you have a water meter, periodically record your meter reading just before going to bed and then again in the morning before using any water. A difference in the two readings usually means there is a leak that needs repairing.

Outside

When summer arrives and it is time to water the lawn and wash the car, household water use can increase by 50% or more! Watering and washing wisely can save water without comprising your landscape or look.

1. Lawns and gardens require only 5 millimeters of water per day during warm weather and even less during spring and fall. Do not over-water in anticipation of a shortage. Soil cannot store extra water.
2. It is more efficient and effective to water your lawn every three to five days, rather than for a short period every day. Most shrubs and young trees need water only once per week, even in warm weather.
3. Lawn clippings are over 50% water. Leaving them on your lawn enables you to use less water and fertilizer and produces less run off.
4. Do not turn on sprinklers and leave them running continuously for the entire day. Use shut off timers or on/off timers, if possible instead.
5. To avoid less water loss due to evaporation, water only during the cool part of the day, in the morning or evening. Do not water on windy days.
6. Keeping your lawns healthy and maintaining them at a height of 6.5 centimeters saves water because taller grass holds water better, a healthy lawn also chokes out weeds better.
7. Wash your vehicle only when absolutely necessary. When you do, do not leave the hose running. Use a bucket of soapy water and a trigger nozzle instead.
8. Cleaning your sidewalks and driveways with a broom instead of a garden hose will help conserve water and keep you active.
9. Set your mower blades high – five cm to eight cm. Short lawns not only require more water they are also harder to maintain and encourage weeds and disease.
10. If you have a swimming pool, use a cover to reduce water loss due to evaporation and check your system regularly for leaks.
11. Collect rainwater from the eaves of your house in a large garbage pail or rain barrel.
12. Water the roots, not the leaves.
13. Use compost and mulch.
14. Replace grass with drought – resistant plants, the more the better, as vegetation reduces run – off.

Conserving Water Quiz

True or False

1. 10% of the water we use is in the kitchen.
2. Washing vegetables in a partially filled sink can save 5 liters of water each time.
3. One leak can waste 100 liters of water per year.
4. Lawns and gardens require 5 millimeters of water on a warm day.
5. Most shrubs need to be watered once a day.
6. Short lawns require less water.
7. Doing only full loads of laundry you can save 2,000 liters of water per load.
8. Installing a high efficient washing machine will save 10 liters of water per load
9. Laundry accounts for 20% of the water we consume at home.
10. The average 15 minute shower uses about 300 liters of water.
11. Cutting your shower time in half could save 100 bath tubs of water a year.
12. Turing off the tap while brushing your teeth will save 8 liters of water a minute.

Answers

1. True
2. True
3. False, one leak can waste several thousands of water each year.
4. True
5. False, most shrubs and small trees only have to be watered once a week.
6. False, short lawns require more water.
7. True
8. False, a high efficient washing machine saves 96 liters of water per load.
9. True
10. True
11. False, cutting your shower time in half can save up to 300 bath tubs of water a year.
12. True