# Water Facts & Fancies

A lot of things many people believe just don't hold water. Here, for example, are a few ideas about water that the experts say are all wet:

**Myth:** We have less water today than we did 100 years ago.

**Fact:** There is the same amount of water on earth today as there was a 100 years ago and three billion years ago. The difference is that today, many more demands are placed on the same amount of water. Because our demands on water continue to grow but our supply doesn't, everyone needs to consider, protect and get involved with decisions that affect water resources.

**Myth:** There are more pollutants in drinking water today than there were 25 years ago.

**Fact:** Scientists think not. Unlike 25 years ago, we now have sophisticated testing instruments that enable us to know more about our water than ever before. With this knowledge, the drinking water community is taking steps to treat what's in our water, to curb the flow of pollution and keep our water safe and wholesome.

**Myth:** "New" water is better than treated water.

**Fact:** Most of our water has been touched by some type of human or animal activity. Even in "pristine" wilderness areas, studies have found bacteria contaminating the water. It's always a good idea to drink only water you know has been treated. If you are out in the wilderness, boil water form even the purest-appearing stream, and then let it cool, before you drink it.

**Myth:** Bottled water is safer than tap water.

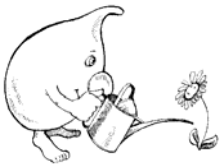
**Fact:** The safety of bottled and tap water depend on the source. Monitoring and source protection, treatment and testing ultimately determine the quality of the finished product. In the United States, tap water is monitored and tested rigorously.

**Myth:** Using a home water treatment device will make tap water safer and more healthful to drink.

**Fact:** Filters may change the taste, smell or appearance of tap water, but will not necessarily make the water safer to drink. All home treatment devices require regular maintenance or water quality problems may result.

**Myth:** Any lead in the water is the utility's fault.

**Fact:** The most common source of lead in drinking water is the plumbing in the home. If you think there may be lead in your pipes or in the solder in the connections, have your water tested by a certified laboratory.



# WATER SAVING TIPS

Studies show that dripping faucets and leaking toilets account for as much as 14% of all indoor water use, equivalent to 10 gallons (38 liters) per person of water lost per day.

## Read Your Water Meter

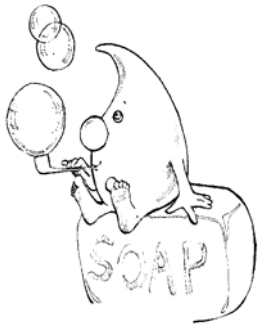
Use your water meter to check for leaks in your home. Start by turning off all faucets and water-using appliances and make sure no one uses water during the testing period. Take a reading on your water meter, wait for about 30 minutes, then take a second reading. If the dial has moved, you have a leak.

## Check for Leaky Toilets

The most common source of leaks is the toilet. Check toilets for leaks by placing a few drops of food coloring in the tank. If after 15 minutes the dye shows up in the bowl, the toilet has a leak. Leaky toilets can usually be repaired inexpensively by replacing the flapper.

- Toilets can account for almost 30% of all indoor water use, more than any other fixture or appliance.
- An average of 20% of toilets leak.
- Check toilets periodically for leaks and repair them promptly.
- Older toilets (installed prior to 1994) use 3.5 to 7 gallons (13-27 liters) of water per flush and as much as 20 gallons (76 liters) per person per day. Replacing an old toilet with a new model can save the typical household 7,900 to 21,700 gallons (29,902 - 82,135 liters) of water per year, cutting both your water and wastewater bills. Install an ultra low-flow toilet that requires only 1.6 gallons (6 liters) per flush.
- Reduce the amount of water used by an older toilet by placing a one-gallon plastic jug of water, or two one quart bottles, in the tank to displace toilet flows.
- Don't use the toilet as a trash can. Don’t pour toxic chemicals down your drains.

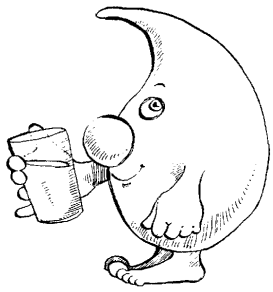
## BATHING TIPS FOR SHOWERS AND TUBS




The third highest use of indoor water is bathing, and because most of us like to use warm water when we bathe, it's also the second highest use of energy in the home.

- Take a quick shower rather than a bath and save an average of 20 gallons (76 liters) of water.
- Install a water-efficient showerhead with a flow rate of less than 2.5 gallons (9.5 liters) per minute. (Replace an existing showerhead if a one-gallon bucket placed under the flow takes less than 20 seconds to fill.)

## Check for Leaky Faucets



The next place to check for leaks is your sink and bathtub faucets. Dripping faucets can usually be repaired by replacing the rubber O-ring or washer inside the valve. Clothes washers can use as much as 30-35 gallons (114-133 liters) of water per cycle and dishwashers as much as 25 gallons (95 liters) per cycle.

- Install aerators on your kitchen and bathroom faucets to reduce indoor water use by as much as 4%.
- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth or shaving and save more than 5 gallons (19 liters) per day.
- Clean vegetables in a sink or pan partially filled with water rather than running water from the tap.
- Re-use the water that vegetables are washed in for watering houseplants or for cleaning.
- If you wash dishes by hand, rinse them in a sink partially filled with clean water instead of under running water.
- Instead of waiting for tap water to get cold enough for drinking, keep a bottle of water in the refrigerator.
- Whenever possible, compost food scraps or dispose of them in the garbage rather than using the garbage disposal which requires a high level of water for operation.

## Dishwashers

Only run your dishwasher when it is full to make the best use of water, energy and detergent. Cut down on the amount of rinsing you do before loading the dishwasher. Most modern dishwashers do an excellent job of cleaning dishes, pots and pans all by themselves.
When purchasing a new appliance, look for one offering several different cycles. This will allow you to select more energy and water efficient cycles when heavy duty cleaning is not required.

## OUTDOOR WATER SAVING TIPS

- Wash your car with a bucket of soapy water and use a nozzle to stop the flow of water from the hose between rinsings.
- Clean driveways and sidewalks with a broom instead of the hose.
- Check for leaks in outdoor faucets, pipes and hoses.
- Prevent the creation of leaks by shutting off and draining water lines to outside spigots in the winter.
- Cover your spa or pool to reduce evaporation. An average size pool left uncovered can lose as much as 1,000 gallons (3,785 liters) of water per month.
- Also, check your spa/pool for leaks and have them repaired promptly.

## PROTECT DRINKING WATER

Dispose of used motor oil properly. One quart of motor oil can contaminate more than 250,000 gallons of water.