

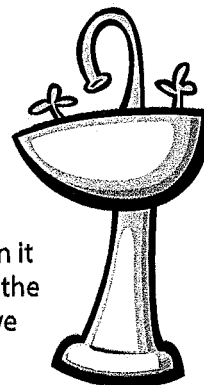


Fix a Leak Week Family Fact Sheet

Fix a Leak Week, sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense® program, takes place in March. It's a time when families are encouraged to check for water leaks and drips in bathrooms, kitchens, and yards at home.

What Is WaterSense?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA for short, is the part of our nation's government that helps to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land where we live. EPA's WaterSense program encourages Americans to use only the water they need and avoid wasting this precious resource. This concept, known as "water efficiency," is important because the more people there are on the planet, the more strain it puts on limited water supplies. In fact, from 1950 to 2005, the number of people living in the United States doubled, while the demand for water more than tripled. Using only what we need helps keep this growing thirst for water in check.

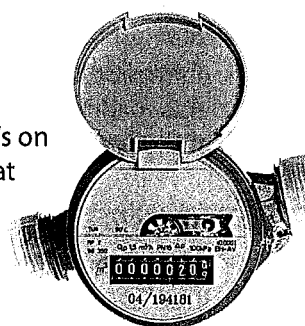


The Facts on Leaks:

- Did you know that, in a year, water leaks in your home can waste enough water to fill a backyard swimming pool? And if we added up all the water leaking in people's homes right now it could fill a trillion gallons of milk jugs? That's enough water for all the people living in the cities Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami combined.
- Water-wasting leaks include running toilets, dripping faucets, and other leaking pipes around your home. Most of these leaks can be fixed easily.
- Fixing these leaks can save your family more than 10 percent on water bills. That's like saving \$1 for every \$10 spent on water.

Finding Leaks:

- Ask your parents to help you find the water meter on your house. Usually, it's on the outside of the house in a box or under a metal cover on the sidewalk that says "Water." The numbers in the box represent either gallons or cubic feet of water used in your home. Check your meter, then don't flush the toilet, run the faucet, or use any water for two hours. At the end of the two hours, check the water meter again. If the meter does not read exactly the same, you probably have a leak.
- Walk through your house listening for running toilets and looking for drips. Drips usually mean leaks.
- Find out if your toilet is leaking silently by placing a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank (that's the area behind the toilet seat—ask for mom or dad's help to remove the lid). If color shows up in the toilet bowl after 10 minutes without flushing, you have a leak. Once you finish the experiment, flush a few times so you don't stain the toilet.



Faucets:

- Take a watch or clock with a second hand and time how often your faucet drips. A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons in a year!
- There are parts that hold your faucet together called washers and gaskets—they can wear down and cause drips. If someone in your house is handy, these parts usually can be replaced easily.
- There's also a little screen device called an "aerator" that can be screwed onto the tip of your faucet—it adds air into the water stream so you can use less water to wash your hands or brush your teeth without noticing a difference in water flow. Ask your parents to look for the WaterSense label when buying an aerator or replacing a faucet—that means the product will work well and save water.

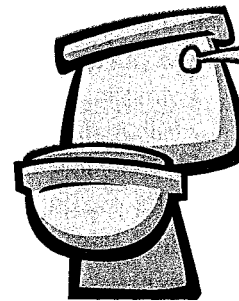


Showers:

- Showerheads—the place where water comes out in streams at the top of your shower—can also get old and leak, even when the water is not on. A showerhead that drops just 10 drips in a minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. That's enough water, if you saved it all up, to wash 60 loads of dishes in your dishwasher!
- Most leaky showerheads can be fixed by making sure they're screwed in tight. Having someone handy wrap the showerhead in "pipe tape," a special tape available at hardware stores, and using a wrench to tighten it will help.

Toilets:

- It's one of the oldest prank phone calls—"Is your toilet running? Then you'd better catch it!" But a running toilet is no joke. If you can hear the water in your toilet making noise, even when no one flushed recently, you have a running toilet that could be wasting 200 gallons of water or more every day! Sometimes you just need to jiggle the handle to fix it, but sometimes a part needs to be replaced.
- Many toilets leaks are caused because the "flapper" is decayed or broken. The flapper is a rubber piece that opens up to let the water flow from the tank into the bowl when you pull down on the toilet handle. If someone in your house is handy, they can easily replace this inexpensive part of your toilet.
- If the problem is not just an old flapper and your family has to replace a leaky toilet, tell your parents to look for one with the WaterSense label to save both water and money on your family's water and sewer bill.

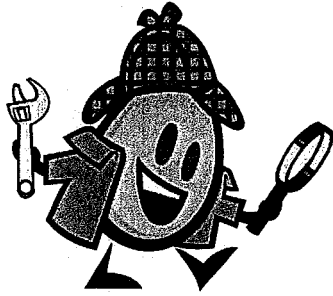


Outdoors:

- Check your garden hose for leaks where it connects to the side of the house. If it leaks when the hose is turned on, make sure the hose is screwed in tight. If that doesn't work, someone handy may need to replace the nylon or rubber hose washer or wrap the "spigot," which is the metal faucet where the end of the hose attaches to the wall, in pipe tape.
- If your family has a sprinkler system that waters your lawn, remind your parents to check the system each spring before turning it on to make sure the sprinklers were not broken during the winter or have sprung any leaks.

For more information, visit www.epa.gov/watersense

Take the 10 Minute WaterSense Challenge



DETECT AND CHASE DOWN LEAKS



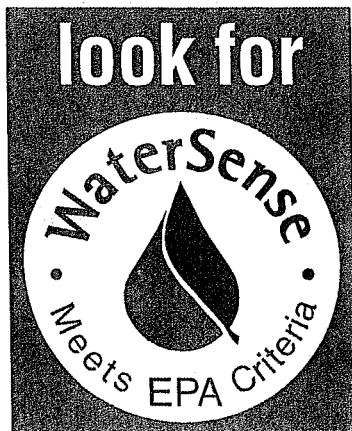
Did You Know

that easy-to-fix water leaks account for more than 1 trillion gallons of water wasted each year in U.S. homes? In fact, the average household leaks more than 10,000 gallons of water per year, or the amount of water it takes to wash 270 loads of laundry, and could be costing you an extra 10 percent on your water bills.

In just 10 minutes, you can search your home for leaks and crack down on water waste. Many common household leaks are quick to find and easy to fix. Worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and leaking showerheads all are easily correctable and can save on your utility bill expenses and water in your community.

So put on your detective hat, lace up your running shoes, and take this 10-minute challenge to detect and chase down leaks!

www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak



Start by Gathering Clues

These clues can help you detect leaks before you even start investigating your home.

1

Check Your Utility Bill

A place to start is to examine your utility bill for January or February. It's likely that a family of four has a serious leak problem if its winter water use exceeds 12,000 gallons (or 16CCF) per month. You can also look for spikes - is your water use a lot higher this month than it was last month? Learn more about your water bill: <http://1.usa.gov/1Qw3Eg9>.

2

Read Your Water Meter

Find your water meter, which is usually near the curb in front of your home but can be inside your home (e.g., in the basement) in cold climates. Use a screwdriver to remove the lid on your meter, which is heavy and usually marked "water."

Now that you've found the meter, take a reading during a period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same after two hours, you probably have a leak. Here's a tip on how to read a water meter: <http://bit.ly/1TeYnMu>.

3

Take a Toilet Test

Put a few drops of food coloring into the tank at the back of your toilet and let it sit for 10 minutes. If color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. Make sure to flush afterward to avoid staining, and consider replacing your old toilet flapper if it is torn or worn.

While you're waiting to see if your toilet has a leak, walk around your house with the checklist on the next page and see if you can chase down any other water wasters.

Checklist for Chasing Down Leaks

Here are some of the places leaks may be hiding in your home.

Some leaks require a simple fix—a worn toilet flapper, loose pipe connection, or showerhead with stray spray. But you may want to consult a licensed plumber to stop your running toilet, broken sprinklers, water heater drips, or malfunctioning water supply lines. Take a quick inventory of clues to water waste:

IN THE BATHROOM

- Toilets: Listen for running water and conduct the food coloring test described on the first page.
- Faucets: Listen for drips and turn on the tap to check for water going the wrong direction.
- Showerheads: Turn on and look for drips or stray sprays that can be stopped with tape.
- In the tub: Turn on the tub, then divert the water to the shower and see if there's still a lot of water coming from the tub; that could mean the tub spout diverter needs replacing.
- Under the sink: Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges.

IN THE LAUNDRY OR UTILITY ROOM

- Under the sink: Check for pooling water under pipe connections.
- Clothes washer: Check for pooling water, which could indicate a supply line leak.

DON'T FORGET TO GO OUTSIDE

- At the spigot: Ensure tight connections with the hose and see if the hose washer needs replacing.
- In-ground irrigation system: Check for broken sprinklers or nozzles spraying in the wrong direction. You may want to consult an irrigation auditor certified by a WaterSense labeled program to improve system efficiency: <http://1.usa.gov/1YbFMJK>.

THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

Check for signs of moisture or mold on your walls, ceilings, or floors. This could indicate that a pipe is wreaking havoc behind the scenes and requires the attention of a professional.

If you want to do a more detailed investigation for leaks, check out the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association Smart Home Water Guide at www.smarthomewaterguide.org.

If any of your fixtures needs replacing, remember to look for the WaterSense label when purchasing plumbing products. WaterSense labeled products are independently certified to use at least 20 percent less water and perform as well or better than standard models.

For more information, visit <http://1.usa.gov/1Qqw75T>.

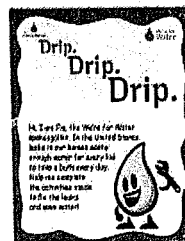
IN THE KITCHEN

- Faucet: Listen for drips and tighten aerators or replace fixtures if necessary.
- Sprayer: Check to make sure water is spraying smoothly and clean openings as needed.
- Under the sink: Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges.
- Appliances: Check for pooling water underneath dishwashers and refrigerators with ice makers, which could indicate a supply line leak.

IN THE BASEMENT OR UTILITY ROOM

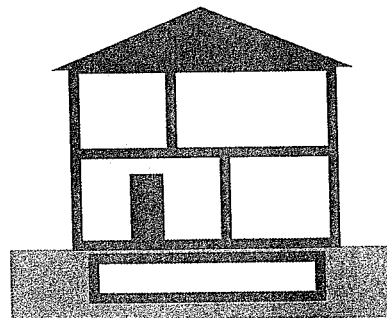
- Water heater: Check beneath the tank for pooling water, rust, or other signs of leakage.

FOR THE KIDS



Kids aren't just the leaders of tomorrow, they're the dreamers and do-er's of today. "Test Your WaterSense" and try other fun activities at Flo's Kids Zone at: <http://1.usa.gov/1IzAJGv>

MARK AN X FOR LEAKS



Hey Kids, It's Time to Test Your WaterSense!



Think you know everything there is to know about water? You can't be sure until you test your WaterSense.

Circle your answers below. Use the answer key at the end to see how many questions you answer correctly!

1. When is the best time of day to water your lawn?
 - A. Early morning or late evening
 - B. In the afternoon
 - C. All day long

2. How much water could you save by washing your bike with a bucket and sponge rather than letting the hose run?
 - A. 1 gallon a minute
 - B. 3 gallons a minute
 - C. 4 gallons a minute
 - D. 5 gallons a minute

3. Which of these ways to wash the car saves the most water?
 - A. Wash it in the driveway with the garden hose
 - B. Drive it into the lake
 - C. Take it through a car wash that recycles water

4. How much water does a family of four (mom, dad, brother, and sister) use everyday?
 - A. 50
 - B. 100
 - C. 250
 - D. 400

5. True or False: It isn't important to save water because there is so much of it on Earth.
 - A. True
 - B. False

6. Stuck helping mom or dad wash the dishes? Which may use less water?
- A. Washing dishes under a running tap
 - B. Washing dishes in a fully loaded dishwasher
7. True or False: Keeping the water running when you brush your teeth wastes a lot of water.
- A. True
 - B. False
8. Which of the following uses less water?
- A. Taking a 5 minute shower
 - B. Taking a bath
9. Which of these everyday objects is a water-saving tool?
- A. A bucket
 - B. A clock
 - C. A broom
 - D. All of the above
10. Which of these activities wastes the MOST water per day in the average home?
- A. Running the tap while washing dishes
 - B. Using a garbage disposal
 - C. A leaky toilet
 - D. Long showers
11. True or False: It's okay to flush some trash down the toilet like cotton balls and tissue.
- A. True
 - B. False
12. What should you do if you see or hear a leaky faucet in your house?
- A. Ignore it—drips are no big deal
 - B. Do nothing—there is no way to fix a drippy faucet
 - C. Tell your parents

Answer Key:

1.	<p>Answer: A</p> <p>Although it is fun to run through the sprinklers at the hottest time of day, your lawn should only be watered in the early morning or late evening when it's cooler. Watering the yard when it's really hot outside causes the water to evaporate before the plants have time to drink it.</p>
2.	<p>Answer: D</p> <p>Washing your bike with a bucket and sponge will not only get your bike extra clean, it will also save water. Hoses can waste more than 6 gallons a minute while a bucket only uses a few gallons for a whole wash. Use a bucket and sponge when you help your parents wash the car, too!</p>
3.	<p>Answer: C</p> <p>Many car washes save more water than if you wash your car at home. They do this by recycling the water that they use instead of letting it run down the sewer drains. Tell your parents to search online to find a "water-efficient" car wash near your house.</p>
4.	<p>Answer: D</p> <p>How can a small family use so much water? It may seem hard to believe, but the average person uses 100 gallons of water each day—that's enough to fill 1,600 drinking glasses! There are many things you can do to save water.</p>
5.	<p>Answer: B</p> <p>Although there is a lot of water on earth (75 percent of the earth's surface!), most of it is salt water so you can't drink it. It is very important to save the water we use every day because less than 1 percent of the earth's water can be used by people!</p>
6.	<p>Answer: B</p> <p>To waste the least amount of water in the kitchen, use your dishwasher only when it's filled all of the way with dirty dishes. You could also fill the sink with water instead of running the tap.</p>
7.	<p>Answer: A</p> <p>You can save up to 8 gallons of water by turning off the faucet when you brush your teeth in the morning and before bedtime. That adds up to more than 100 gallons of water each month!</p>
8.	<p>Answer: A</p> <p>While it might be more fun to splash in a warm bath, it takes 70 gallons of water to fill a tub but only 10 to 25 gallons for a 5 minute shower. If you do take a bath, put the stopper in the drain right away and change the temperature as you fill the tub.</p>

9.	Answer: D Put a bucket under the tap while you make the water the right temperature. The water you collect can be used to water plants or fill up a squirt gun. Use a clock to keep your showers under 5 minutes. Use a broom instead of the hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk.
10.	Answer: C A leaky toilet can waste about 200 gallons of water every day! Ask to help your parents test your toilets for leaks. Place a drop of food coloring in the tank and if the color shows in the bowl for flushing, you have a leak.
11.	Answer: B Flushing the toilet for silly reasons wastes a lot of water. Cutting out 1 flush per day saves enough water to wash 32 loads of laundry each year.
12.	Answer: C Leaky faucets are big water wasters. If you see or hear a leaky faucet, tell your parents about it so they can get it fixed. If you don't, those drips and drops can add up to 2,700 gallons of wasted water in 1 year!

SCORING:

9 or more questions correct:

Congratulations, you're a WaterSense Hero! You understand that water is a precious resource that must be used more efficiently. To learn more about the WaterSense program and how to be more water efficient, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

6-8 questions correct:

You're a WaterSense Whiz Kid! To learn more about why water efficiency is important and how you can become water-efficient, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

Less than 6 questions correct:

You're a WaterSense Wonder! But that means there's room for improvement! To learn more about why water efficiency is important and how you can become water-efficient, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

Thank you for testing your WaterSense. Remember every drop counts!