

Water Conservation: Every Drop Counts

Why is water conservation so important?

Because a safe and secure supply of water is no longer a "sure thing." While demand for water is on the rise, pollution, declining water tables, and prolonged drought conditions are shrinking the useable supply.

Why do we need to reassess our attitudes about water and water conservation?

We use water everyday in so many situations - at home and at work - that we take it pretty much for granted. Water passes through our households, cooking our food, bathing us, washing our clothes, watering our lawns, and carrying away the various by-products of our day-to-day lives. We return it to the environment, often to the same body of water it came from, usually in a much poorer state.

Although water comes out our taps and goes down our drains, we would be mistaken to think that it's a one-way trip. In fact, water continually cycles through the environment. For many Canadian water users, water isn't just used, it is re-used! A sobering thought next time you flush the

toilet and then brush your teeth or drink a glass of water.

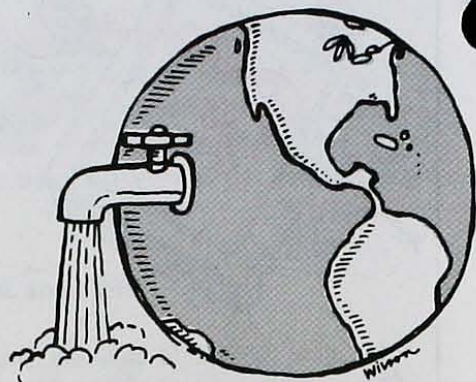
Water wisdom begins at home, by becoming aware of our water using habits. Most of us waste so much water we can easily cut back. Water conservation doesn't mean cramping our lifestyles by doing without; it simply means reducing the amount of water we waste.

By following the three golden rules of water conservation - reduce, repair and retrofit - we can easily cut our water use nearly in half.

Reduce - By making small changes to water use habits and by installing water-saving devices, we can significantly reduce the amount of water we use.

Repair - Regularly check toilets, pipes and faucets for leaks and repair immediately. A leak of one drop per second wastes 10,000 litres of water a year.

Retrofit - Retrofit means adapting or replacing an older, less water efficient fixture or appliance with one of the many water saving devices now on the market.



Water-wise tips for kitchens and laundry rooms:

- thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or the microwave
- rinse fruits and vegetables in a partially filled sink or bowl
- refrigerate a bottle of drinking water or use ice cubes
- rinse hand-washed dishes with a spray device or in a sink or pan full of hot water
- scrape excess food from your dishes
- wash only full loads in your dishwasher
- wash only full loads in your washing machine or adjust the water level to use only as much water as you need
- buy a dishwasher and washing machine with a water and energy saving cycle
- use a composter instead of a garbage disposal system

Water-wise tips for bathrooms:

- fill a glass of water to rinse your mouth when brushing your teeth
- fill the sink with hot water to rinse your razor when you shave
- install a water-saving showerhead
- take shorter showers
- take a "sailor's shower" or turn off the water while you are soaping and shampooing, then rinse off
- fill the tub with only as much water as you really need and plug the drain before you run any water
- replace your old toilet with a new efficient low-flush model and use between 50% and 80% less water per flush

Canadians waste a lot of water. On average we use about 390 litres (80 gallons) of water per person, per day - more than twice as much as Europeans. Of the 390 litres:

