

Conservation

1. What activity in my home uses the most water?

Toilet flushing is by far the largest single use of water in a home. On the average, a dishwasher uses about 50 percent less water than the amount used when you wash and rinse dishes by hand if the dishes are not pre-rinsed and if only full loads are washed in the dishwasher.

Without counting lawn watering, typical percentages of water use for a family of four are:

- Toilet flushing – 40%
- Bath and shower – 32%
- Laundry – 14%
- Dishwashing – 6%
- Cooking and drinking – 5%
- Bathroom sink – 3%

2. Which uses more water, a tub bath or a shower?

That depends on many factors: how big your tub is, how long you shower, how fast the water comes out of your showerhead, whether or not you turn off the water while soaping, and so forth. Answer this question yourself by closing the drain when you shower and see if you get a tub full of water. Don't try this in a shower stall.

3. I leave the water running while brushing my teeth. Does this waste much water?

You bet! Leaving the water running is a bad habit; about 4 to 6 gallons (20 to 25 liters) of water go down the drain needlessly every time you brush. Another way many people unthinkingly waste water is while they are waiting for the hot water to come to a shower, tub, or sink. Catching this water to use for plant watering is a good conservation tip.

4. I use a lot of water in the kitchen. How can I conserve there?

Here are several tips:

- Scrape dishes without using water and don't rinse them before putting in the dishwasher.
- Clean vegetables in a pan of water rather than under running tap water, then use the water to give your plants a drink.
- Use the garbage disposal sparingly.
- Run the dishwasher only when it is full.

5. Why are there aerators on home water faucets?

When mixed with water, tiny air bubbles from the aerator prevent the water from splashing too much. Because the water flow is less, often half the regular flows, aerators also help conserve water.

6. Many water quality problems in the home – lead, red water, sand in the system, and so forth – are cured by flushing the system. Isn't that a waste of water?

Yes, but you can avoid losing this water by catching it in a container and using it for plant and garden watering. A true waste of water is a use that gives no benefit. Flushing water does provide a benefit if it keeps lead or rust out of your water or brings hot water to your tub. Try to use your flush water, but if you can't don't feel too bad. This water has served a useful purpose.

7. My water faucet drips. Should I bother to fix it?

Yes. Drips waste a precious product, and this waste should be stopped, even though the dripping water may not register on your water meter.

8. How should I water my lawn to avoid wasting water?

Water your lawn for long periods a couple of times each week, rather than every day. An inch a week is a good rule of thumb, but this varies for different grasses and different parts of the country. Check with your local garden store. Water early in the morning to avoid excessive evaporation; it is usually less windy then, too, and the water pressure is usually higher. Night watering may promote lawn disease. Use a sprinkler that makes large drops, because small drops evaporate faster. Try to avoid watering paved areas and don't use your hose to wash sidewalks or driveways.

9. During time of water shortage, shouldn't decorative fountains be turned off?

In most cases, fountain water is recirculated (used over and over) and is not wasted. If water losses from evaporation are high, however, fountains should be turned off.

10. During times of water shortage, does not serving water to restaurant customer really help?

Skipping water in restaurants serves as a good reminder to everyone about the importance of saving water, but the actual volume of water saved is small. Water used to wash the water glasses is also saved, and this is usually more than the drinking water that would normally be served by glass to customers. Health experts emphasize the importance of drinking at least six to eight glasses of water each day (remember you drink water in many forms), so if you want water to drink, ask for it. Skip it if you are just going to let the glass sit on the table while you drink something else.

11. Why should I conserve if there is not really a water shortage on the globe?

Suppose you're in a growing community. As the population increases, so does the demand for water. This means that every so often, the water supplier must spend some money to find another source of water. If people conserved, the water demand would not grow as fast as the population and the need to look for more water would be delayed. This permits the municipality to defer expenditures and to use the money for something else in the meantime. In addition, not all of the water taken as drinking water gets right back to the source. Thus, if a community is conserving water so that less is needed, more water will be left as an aquatic habitat for creatures that live in water. Also, only a small part of our global water can be used for drinking. A vast majority is saltwater or polluted to the point where it is very expensive to treat for drinking.