

# Water Conservation and Your Septic System

## Fact Sheet



Minimizing water use is key to a healthy septic system. Low flow appliances, water saving devices and efficient water-use practices can improve the function of your system by allowing for a longer separation and treatment time. It is also important to avoid running multiple water-using appliances at the same time or back-to-back to prevent too much water from entering the system over a short period of time.

Septic systems are designed to hold wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle to the bottom of the tank forming a sludge layer and oil and grease to float to the top forming a scum layer. If too much

water is flowing into the septic tank, wastewater is pushed out into the drainfield before this separation process has time to occur.

Solids pushed out into the drainfield and can cause pipes and soils to become clogged. This can be expensive to fix. Minimizing water use improves the effectiveness of your system and extends the life of the system.

Following efficient water-use practices is especially important if you have an older septic system. Older systems were designed when people used less water, meaning if your system is older it may be under capacity compared to today's standards.

### Tips for Conserving Water

Retrofitting your home for water efficiency is easy. New technology allows huge reductions in water use with the same or better performance than older technology. Install low flow showerheads and faucets and replace older, water-guzzling toilets and appliances with more water efficient versions.

Unnecessary water use can also add up to large volumes and is totally avoidable. Ensure that toilets and faucets aren't leaking and when performing simple tasks such as brushing teeth and doing dishes, make sure to turn the tap off.



### Check for Leaks

Check for leaks. High volume water leaks often come from toilets. They can be hard to detect and are usually caused by worn or misaligned parts. A toilet that continues to run after flushing could be wasting 20-40 litres of water per hour. To check for a toilet leak, place a dye tablet or food colouring in the toilet tank. Wait about 15 minutes, without flushing, and then check the water in your toilet bowl. If the water is coloured, you've got a leak. Toilet repairs may require the assistance of a plumber.