



Doing Your Part for WaterSmart Niagara

Tips to Save Water, Money and Protect Our Environment

There are hundreds of ways to reduce the amount of water you use around the house. Some of the top tips to save water and money are listed here; but don't forget that being truly WaterSmart means thinking beyond the money to your impact on the environment. Using less water also means considering *what* we put down the drain besides water.

Top 10 Tips:

1. Replace any older water guzzling toilets with new models that flush with only 6 litres (1.3 gallons) of water. You can reduce your household water consumption by up to 30%.
2. Install a water efficient showerhead that uses no more than 10 litres (2.5 gallons) of water per minute. Reduce your showering time to 5 to 8 minutes. You can also turn off the water while you soap up, then turn it on again to rinse.
3. Install a facet aerator on your kitchen and bathroom taps to reduce water use by up to 8 litres (1.8 gallons) per minute.
4. When you're buying a new dishwasher or washing machine, consider the water requirements of various models. In particular, front-loading washing machines use up to 40 per cent less water, 60 per cent less energy and less soap, saving you money three ways and reducing the amount of soap going back into the water system. While initially more expensive than top loaders the differences will pay off.
5. Try to run your appliances, such as the washing machine and dishwasher only when full, using the energy saver or shortest cycle/load selector.
6. Check toilets and faucets regularly for leaks to save several litres of water each day.
7. When brushing teeth, shaving, or washing your hands – or your food -- be careful not to let the water run unnecessarily. Put the plug in the basin, tub or sink then fill a cup for rinsing.
8. Use a broom to clean sidewalks and driveway instead of a hose or power washer.
9. Drink responsibly. Niagara's water is clean, safe and healthy to drink. But instead of running the tap to enjoy a cold one, keep a covered container of tap

water in the refrigerator, waiting to be enjoyed. Ensure you wash the container and change the water every few days – and use what's left on your plants or for cleaning.

10. Well? Well! Homes on wells may not be able to save money on their water and sewer bills, but replacing inefficient fixtures with efficient ones has many advantages. Low flow toilets reduce the amount of water you draw from your well and lengthen the life of your water supply. Secondly, they improve the functioning of your septic system because less water means less dilution of the waste emptying into the septic tank and tiles. Waste receives a longer treatment period and lower volume also means an extended life for your septic system. Even the water pump comes on less often and this in turn will save you money on your electricity bill.

More Tips:

1. Clean it the way Grandma used to!! Common household products such as white vinegar, lemons and baking soda can often be substituted for cleaning products that contain chemicals and are environmentally unfriendly when tipped down the drain. Alternatively, consider all-natural cleaning products when you shop. It's also beneficial to the allergy-sufferer in your home. For more ideas, check out these links:
<http://housekeeping.about.com/cs/environment/a/alternateclean.htm>
<http://www.care2.com/channels/solutions/home/344>
2. Sink garbage disposals waste water. Not only do they use hundreds of litres of water by creating a slurry to send down the drain, they also increase the load on water treatment plans. Put organic wastes in the green bin or, if you're location is not part of that program, consider composting.
3. Items like used tissues and cigarette butts belong in the wastebasket or the ashtray, not the toilet. Besides the potential of costly plumbing problems, those items are not easily processed in water treatment facilities.
4. Before you load your dishwasher, scrape food residue from dishes into your green bin instead of rinsing them under running water.
5. Minimize heavy water use activities during periods of heavy rain: in areas where storm sewers are combined with sanitary sewers excessive water use can contribute to sewer over flows which can potentially pollute our waterways so postpone laundry and avoid using a dishwasher if possible until the storm event passes.

6. Don't hesitate to deal with fluids leaking from your car. Not only can your safety be compromised, but oil, gas, brake and other fluids that drip onto the ground are damaging to your property, expensive to you...and to our environment as they wash into our waterways.
7. Pass on the salt. In the winter, minimize how much salt you use on your driveways and walkways. Using less salt can save you the cost of replacing damaged plants and lawns, concrete and metal. Most important, it reduces the amount being washed into our sewers and water systems. For tips on when to use salt and other ice melters, check out http://www.icemelter.ca/traction/index_e.php
8. Garden like grandpa used to: Old fashioned methods to save water like collecting rain water and leaving clippings on the lawn not only drive down the amount of water you use, but will also help you avoid the use of chemicals and pesticides which are costly to buy, and costly on the environment when they make their way into the sewers. Check out the Region's Smart Gardening site for more information at <http://www.regional.niagara.on.ca/government/initiatives/smartgardening/water/tips.aspx>
9. Properly dispose of household hazardous materials; and never pour chemicals down the drain or sewer! Take old household products such as cleaners, unused medicines and motor oil to your local Household Hazardous Waste Depot or Collection Event.
10. Don't litter: Most litter eventually ends up in Lake Ontario or local creeks where it damages aquatic habitat.
11. Pick up after your pets: Rain washes pet litter into the local creeks and storm sewers. This contributes to the spread of bacteria that pollutes our beaches.
12. Wash your car at a car wash. When you wash your car in your driveway, all the soap and oil runs into storm drains, which empty into our watercourses. Car washes are properly designed to treat and recycle the water.
13. Be a watersmart boater. Carefully fuel your boat using proper containers and equipment. One drop of gasoline can contaminate large bodies of water for a long period of time. Do not discharge sewage from your boat into the water and clean the bottom of your boat in order not to transport invasive species from one lake to another. When swimming, avoid using soap or shampoo in the water. These contain nitrates and other contaminants which can affect your drinking water source.
14. Keep your eye on the shore. If you own shoreline property, maintain a natural shoreline. Leaving a buffer of vegetation along shorelines protects banks against erosion and ice damage. Vegetation, such as grasses or shrubs, filter possible hazardous materials that could be leaching from your lawn into what may be your

source of drinking water (lake or river). Shoreline vegetation is also a great habitat for many species of fish and other aquatic forms.

For even more tips on using water wisely, check out these links:

www.smartgardening.ca

www.h2ouse.org

www.awwa.org/waterwiser