

## CELEBRATE NATIONAL DRINKING WATER WEEK MAY 3-8, 2010

### “ONLY TAP WATER DELIVERS!”

How many times a day do you give thanks for the clean, potable water that comes flowing out of your faucet? Although we may take it for granted, the fact is that less than 1% of the world's fresh water (or about 0.007% of all water on earth) is readily accessible for direct human use, and over 884 million people in the world lack access to safe water supplies.

**This is approximately one in eight people. (Now do you feel lucky?)**

Many people are worried about global warming, and the climate change crisis that is occurring all over the globe. However, experts are predicting that soon the number of people without access to clean drinking water will climb past 1 billion. This [water crisis](#) will have repercussions all over the globe as different cultures scramble to secure life giving water for consumption and agricultural uses.

It's important that we all do our part to make the best use of the resources we have, which means finding **ways to reuse water and reduce our daily consumption.**

**Here are some easy, inexpensive ways that you can get started:**

#### **1. If it's broken...fix it!**

It might seem like a no brainer, but leaking faucets and dripping shower heads are some of the biggest household water wasters. In fact, just a small drip from a worn faucet washer can waste 20 gallons of water per day. Larger leaks can waste hundreds of gallons!

Don't forget that toilets can leak too, but it's harder to spot. Put a little food coloring in your toilet tank. Don't flush it, and if the color begins to appear in the bowl within 30 minutes, you have a leak that should be repaired immediately.

Take a few minutes to check on all the faucets and toilets in the house, and if you notice a leak, break out your wrench, or call up a plumber.

#### **2. Install aerators**

We all take showers and baths to stay clean, and use the bathroom sink to brush our teeth and wash our faces. But have you stopped to think about how much clean, drinkable water is rushing down the drain during these hygiene rituals? The average home shower blasts out about 7-10 gallons of water per minute, which means even if you're only taking a ten minute shower, you've already wasted 100 gallons of water before breakfast! If you leave the tap running while you brush your teeth or shave, you could be sending 5-10 gallons of water down the drain.

The good news is that both of these problems can be solved by installing an inexpensive device called an [aerator or restrictor](#) into your faucets and shower heads. Aerators work by mixing air into the water stream, which gives you a nice even pressure, even though you're using a fraction of the water.

### 3. DIY low-flow toilet

If you're shocked about the sheer volume of water you're wasting at the sink and in the shower, get ready to brace yourself. Toilets use about 30 percent of the total water used in a household, and if you're still using a conventional single flush toilet, you might be wasting up to 3.5 gallons of water in one flush.

If you don't have the money (or desire) to replace your conventional toilet with a more efficient one, it's easy to convert your existing throne to a low-flow toilet all on your own. *Buy an inexpensive tank ball or float booster. This may save ten or more gallons of water per day*

### 4. Catch it if you can!

The average American family uses about 400 gallons of water per day, and you might find it hard to believe that a staggering 30 percent of that isn't even used for drinking, cooking or cleaning: it's used to water lawns and gardens, wash automobiles, maintain swimming pools, and clean sidewalks and driveways.

It's important to remember that while we can't necessarily drink the water that falls from the sky as rain (air pollution!) we can use it for these other, non-consumptive applications. In order to take advantage of this free, and often squandered source of water, you can install [rain catchment systems](#) on your roof or [rain barrels](#) around your home.

### 5. Be smart

Even if you can't manage to make any of these upgrades or additions to your home right away, there are plenty of behavioral changes that can be made to reduce your family's water footprint.

- Turn off the water when you're washing dishes by hand, brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Only run the clothes washer or the dishwasher when you've got a full load.
- Avoid baths and take shorter showers.
- Plant [drought-resistant lawns](#), shrubs and plants in your yard, and put down mulch wherever you can to help water from evaporating too quickly.
- If you must water your lawn, be sure to place your sprinklers in such a way that no water will fall on sidewalks or driveways, and only water in the early morning or evening, when the weather is cooler.
- Use a broom, and not a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalks.
- Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other such waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
- Use the garbage disposal less and the garbage more (or better yet compost!) and you could save 50 to 150 gallons a month.