

Resources To Help You Conserve and Protect Water

Conserving water is an easy, immediate, and satisfying way to reduce water usage and the costs associated with using water (including any expenditures for filtering, softening, and heating water), as well as reducing wastewater and thus sewerage charges.

Discover all the resources available at the Water Footprint Network: <https://waterfootprint.org/en/>. At the library, a great book to check out is *Your Water Footprint: The Shocking Facts About How Much Water We Use to Make Everyday Products* by Stephen Leahy.

Locally, see this Madison Water Utility site for water conservation tips:

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/water/sustainability/conservation-tips>. This site has information specifically on leaks: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/water/sustainability/conservation-tips/is-there-a-leak>.

Focus on Energy offers a free showerhead pack: <http://www.energyfederation.org/focusonenergy/packs.html>.

Protect our shared aquifer and surface waters! For useful information on preventing water pollution, go to <https://www.madsewer.org/Education/Pollution-Prevention> and click these great links: Non-flushables; Pharmaceuticals; Phosphorus; Chloride; and Mercury. (Pro tips: Use compost and mulch rather than phosphorus-based fertilizers; avoid pesticides and herbicides. Use non-toxic household cleaners. Fix oil or lubricant leaks in your car and keep the exhaust working properly.)

Adopt a storm drain! Go to <https://bit.ly/2H4FEn9> and zoom in to see which drains are available for adoption near you. To adopt a storm drain, contact Brad at 608-222-2525 or bbuun@ci.monona.wi.us.

Safely dispose of unused medicines and keep them out of wastewater by finding a MEDDROP site near you: <https://safercommunity.net/meddrop/>.

Eco-Action Tuesdays

Eco-Action Tuesdays is a program series based on the “ripple effect”.

Beginning in our own backyard, we explore sustainability issues through hands-on, entertaining presentations on the fourth Tuesday, March–October.

Discover how the eco-actions you take at home—and share with others—can ripple throughout the community, creating a healthier, more sustainable place.

mymonona.com/163/Eco-Action-Tuesdays

Eco-Action Tuesdays are sponsored by:



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Monona Public Library
1000 Nichols Road
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(608) 222-6127
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Water Challenge

Why Should I Conserve and Protect Water?

All life requires water to survive! We need water every day for drinking, growing, preparing, and cooking food, and for cleaning. Reliable access to clean water and sanitation is critical for personal and public health; clean water is crucial for a healthy environment.

Water is incredibly precious and valuable! Our local area has more abundant, clean, fresh water than many places on Earth. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 35% of the world's population lacks access to improved sanitation. Past practices treated water as if it were endlessly available. Today we know that this isn't true. Water is a vitally important shared resource that needs to be conserved and protected.

Act to reduce water use and water pollution!

Water Challenge Helpful Hints: Saving Water at Home

We need water to survive—we use water every day to drink, to grow and prepare food, and to clean our bodies and clothes. Saving water at home is simple!

- In an average home, showers are typically the third largest water use after toilets and clothes washers. On average in America, a typical shower uses 17.2 gallons and lasts for 8.2 minutes. The EPA estimates that a standard shower head uses 2.5 gallons of water per minute. In contrast, a low-flow shower head uses 1.5 gallons of water per minute. Consider installing a low-flow shower head.
- In an average bathroom faucet, ~2 gallons of water flow out in 1 minute. If you brush for 2 minutes, twice a day (as dentists recommend) with the water off, you'll save nearly 8 gallons of water each day!
- A 5-minute shave uses 10 gallons with the water running; save 7 gallons by filling the sink instead.
- Typically, a full bathtub of water equates to 66 gallons; a half-full bathtub, 33 gallons; a quarter-full bathtub, 17 gallons. Consider reserving baths for an occasional relaxing soak.
- Learn how to read your water meter and water utility bill, which can help you detect leaks.
- *Leak Detection Option 1:* Make sure no water is being used inside or outside your house while you do a meter reading. Check the water usage indicator to see if it is moving. This is a small triangular-shaped dial or a small silver wheel that rotates when water is flowing through the meter. If the dial is moving, chances are you have a leak.
- *Leak Detection Option 2:* Record your meter reading. Wait 1–2 hours, making sure that no water is being used during this time. Take a second meter reading. If the numbers have changed, you have a leak.

- Not all plants and animals require the same amount of water to grow and to be processed for us to eat. Stephen Leahy reports that the actual number of gallons of water needed for the foods in this challenge is: Tomatoes = 28, apples = 100, bananas = 105, rice = 330, chicken = 568, chocolate = 1125, and beef = 2034. Producing one cheeseburger and a 16-oz soda requires 678 gallons of water! Were your guesses close? Notice which foods use the greatest amounts of water and which use the least.

More Helpful Hints: Protecting Water Sources

Things we might think are okay to flush down the toilet or rinse down the drain can actually clog household or city plumbing, cause sewage backups, tangled pumps, or incur other maintenance costs.

- Never flush sanitary products (tampons or applicators), “flushable” wipes, “flushable” diapers, “flushable” kitty litter, dental floss, or medications.
 - Never rinse food grease down the drain; instead, pour it into a paper cup and put it in the trash.
 - About 30% of the water used in a household goes down the toilet! Not using the toilet as a trash can improves water cleanliness and saves water too!
- Storm drains help prevent flooding during heavy storms. Storm water carries leaves, branches, fertilizer, and other debris into Lake Monona that harms beaches, fish, and even our own health (or our pets’).
- Never dispose of anything down the storm drain. Pick up litter to keep it out of the drain.
 - Clean up after pets; discard pet waste in the trash.
 - Aim downspouts at the grass, not the driveway.
 - Use as little salt as possible during the winter on sidewalks and walk ways.
 - Team up with neighbors to keep your street and storm drain(s) clean.

Take the Water Challenge!

- 1. What to Flush?** Liquid and solid human waste (the 3 “P”s: pee, poop, puke) and toilet paper. What things did you *think* were okay to flush but now know not to?
- 2. Take a Shower Challenge.** Time how long you typically shower and then cut that time in half. What is your impression of showering in half the time? How much water did you save showering this way this week? Estimate your water savings for a month and for a year. **Next Level:** Take an eco-shower by turning off the water while lathering. What is your impression of an eco-shower? How much water did you save this way over a week? Estimate your water savings for a month and a year. Do you plan to maintain this way of showering long term? If not, what are some barriers?
- 3. Only Rain Down the Storm Drain.** Find a storm drain near where you live and observe it several times this summer. What do you see in the gutter or stuck in the drain grate? Visit your storm drain throughout the summer and take these actions to help water stay clean and healthy: Clear the storm drain grate of debris before it rains. Rake leaves out of the gutter and pick up trash around the drain so nothing but water goes into the drain. How many times did you do this during the summer? Are you ready to adopt a storm drain?
- 4. Water Leak Detective.** Locate your water meter. Using either Option 1 or Option 2, determine whether you have a water leak somewhere in your system. What were your results? If you have a leak, do a visual inspection to determine the source. Check these common water leak culprits: Faucets, Sink pipes, Garbage disposal, Toilets, Tub or shower, Hot water heater, Water pipe. Once you’ve identified the leak source, how will you fix it? Who can fix it if you can’t?
- 5. Water in Your Food?** How many gallons of water are needed to produce the following foods? Write your estimates, then see the Helpful Hints for answers: 5 medium tomatoes; 3 apples; 2 large bananas; 1 pound each of rice, chicken, chocolate, and beef.