



## The USGS Water Science School

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### Water Questions & Answers

## How much water does the average person use at home per day?



Estimates vary, but each person uses about 80-100 gallons of water per day. Are you surprised that the largest use of household water is to flush the toilet, and after that, to take showers and baths? That is why, in these days of water conservation, we are starting to see toilets and showers that use less water than before.

Many local governments now have laws that specify that water faucets, toilets, and showers only allow a certain amount of water flow per minute. Water agencies in some areas, such as here in Atlanta, Georgia, offer rebates if you install a water-efficient toilet.

In fact, I just put in two new toilets and received a rebate of \$100 for each. Yes, they really do use a lot less water. For your kitchen and bathroom faucets, if you look real close at the head of a faucet, you might see something like "1.0 gpm", which means that the faucet head will allow water to flow at a maximum of 1.0 gallons per minute.



NOTE: Our data here is very general in nature...just to give you a quick idea of your water use. There are some other Web sites that will give you a much more detailed and accurate estimate of your per-capita water use:

- [WECalc](#)
- [CSGNetwork](#)
- [Southwest Florida Water Management District](#)

#### Typical water use at home

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Bath</b>               | A "full tub" varies, of course, but 36 gallons is good average amount.<br><b>Tip:</b> Taking a shower instead of a bath should save a good bit of water.   |
| <b>Shower</b>             | Old showers used to use up to 5 gallons of water per minute. Water-saving shower heads produce about 2 gallons per minute.<br><b>Tip:</b> Taking a shorter shower using a low-flow showerhead saves lots of water. |
| <b>Teeth brushing</b>     | <1 gallon. Newer bath faucets use about 1 gallon per minute, whereas older models use over 2 gallons.<br><b>Tip:</b> Simply turn the faucet off when brushing teeth.   |
| <b>Hands/face washing</b> | 1 gallon<br><b>Tip:</b> Simply turn the faucet off before drying your hands and face. If you don't mind a brisk wash, don't run the faucet until it gets hot   |

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|                                   | before using it. Installing a faucet-head aerator will also reduce the water flow rate.  |
| <b>Face/leg shaving</b>           | 1 gallon<br><b>Tip:</b> Simply turn the faucet off when shaving.   |
| <b>Dishwasher</b>                 | 6-16 gallons. Newer, EnergyStar models use 6 gallons or less per wash cycle, whereas older dishwashers might use up to 16 gallons per cycle.<br><b>Tip:</b> EnergyStar dishwashers not only save a lot of water but also save electricity.   |
| <b>Dish washing by hand:</b>      | About 8-27 gallons. This all depends on how efficient you are at hand-washing dishes. Newer kitchen faucets use about 1.5-2 gallons per minutes, whereas older faucets use more.<br><b>Tip:</b> Efficient hand-washing techniques include installing an aerator in your faucet head and scraping food off, soaking dishes in a basin of soapy water before getting started, and not letting the water run while you wash every dish. And it's best to have two basins to work in--one with hot, soapy water and the other with warm water for a rinse. |
| <b>Clothes washer</b>             | 25 gallons/load for newer washers. Older models might use about 40 gallons per load.<br><b>Tip:</b> EnergyStar clothes washers not only save a lot of water but also save electricity.   |
| <b>Toilet flush</b>               | 3 gallons. Most all new toilets use 1.6 gallons per flush, but many older toilets used about 4 gallons.<br><b>Tip:</b> <a href="#">Check for toilet leaks!</a> <a href="#">Adjust the water level</a> in your tank. But, best to install a new low-flow toilet..   |
| <b>Glasses of water you drank</b> | 8 oz. per small glass (not counting water for Fido or your cats). Also, note that you will be using water for cooking.   |
| <b>Outdoor watering</b>           | 2 gallons per minute, depending on the force of your outdoor faucet. This may not sound like too much but the large size of lawns and yards means outdoor water use can be a significant use of water.   |

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URL: <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/qa-home-percapita.html>

Page Contact Information: [Howard Perlman](#)

Page Last Modified: Friday, 02-Dec-2016 12:52:14 EST