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# ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet

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## Home Water Efficiency: Kitchen and Laundry

Practicing mindfulness is said to be good for you, so why not try it out in the kitchen? Each time you turn on the faucet, bring your thoughts to the present moment and challenge yourself to focus on how you are using water and where you may be able to cut out waste. Are you rinsing dishes under a constant stream of water before putting them into the dishwasher? If so, there are better ways to go about cleaning your dishes that save money, water and energy. Does your sink faucet blast instead of efficiently flow? A simple twist could be the fix. Is your dishwasher or washing machine in need of replacement? Don't wait until it's an emergency. Start looking for a machine that has been tested for performance and efficiency and feel good about making a smart purchase that will pay off in savings and in protection of the natural resources we all share. Being wasteful is unnecessary and just feels bad, so be the change you wish to see and take a few simple steps to protect New Hampshire's water resources and your bank account.

### Out with the old and in with the new.

- ✓ Replace kitchen faucets or faucet aerators with WaterSense-labeled products. WaterSense, sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), certifies water-efficient products that have been independently tested to ensure water savings without sacrificing performance or quality. Look for the label on product packaging at your local retailer or go to the [EPA WaterSense](http://EPA WaterSense) website to learn more.
- ✓ Check the aerator on your kitchen and bathroom sinks (this is the nozzle with the screen on it). Printed on the side of the aerator, there should be a flow rate in gallons per minute (gpm). If the aerator is labeled as higher than 1.5 gpm, replace it with either a 1 gpm or 1.5 gpm aerator, which will save water and still provide enough power for filling pots and washing dishes.
- ✓ If you own a dishwasher older than 1994, then you are wasting \$40 a year on utility bills. Choose an EPA ENERGY STAR®-labeled dishwasher and start saving. To learn more, go to the [Energy Star](http://Energy Star) website.



Source: EPA

### Your laundry will be clean and green.

Outside of toilet flushing, washing clothes is the largest water use in the home. The following water efficiency practices can help you save water while doing laundry:

- ✓ Wash full loads only. If unable to wash a full load, set your washer to the appropriate water level setting.
- ✓ If your washing machine was built before 2003, replace your machine with a new energy- and water-efficient machine. These washers rotate clothes rather than agitate them and use much less water. An efficient machine uses 13 gallons per load compared to a conventional model, which uses 23 gallons per

load, or an older model, which may use up to 40 gallons per load. To learn more, go to the [Energy Star](#) website.

### **How low can you flow?**

- ✓ Turn off the kitchen faucet when not in use, such as while washing hands or doing dishes.
- ✓ New dishwashers don't require dishes to be pre-rinsed. If you have an older model, pre-rinse dishes in a basin with cold water as opposed to under a running tap or instead, use a dish squeegee or scraper.
- ✓ Operate dishwashers with full loads only. Use the water-save cycle if your dishwasher is equipped with one.
- ✓ If washing dishes by hand, rinse them in a basin rather than under running water. If you have two basins, fill one with sudsy water for washing and the other with fresh water for rinsing.
- ✓ Store drinking water in the refrigerator rather than running the tap for cold water.
- ✓ Compost food scraps rather than using a garbage disposal. Not only do disposal units waste water, the fine particles they produce can clog a septic system.
- ✓ Do not run water to melt ice or thaw frozen foods. Defrost food in a microwave or in the refrigerator overnight.
- ✓ Rinse vegetables in a bowl of water rather than under running water. Use the remaining water to water plants.
- ✓ Check for and repair leaks. Old and worn faucet washers and gaskets frequently cause leaks in faucets. To learn more about identifying and repairing leaks yourself, check out the NHDES fact sheet [WD-DWGB-26-23, "Home Water Efficiency: Fixing Leaks Indoors and Out."](#)

### **For More Information**

Please contact the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at (603) 271-2513 or [dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov](mailto:dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov) or visit our website at [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov).

### **References and Resources**

[U.S. EPA WaterSense](#)  
[Water—Use It Wisely \(WUIW\)](#)

Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of August 2019. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.