

## The Why's & How's of Conserving Water

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We seem to be surrounded by water. Water covers 71% of our planet, and three rivers are flowing through our very city. So why is water so precious, and why should we make changes in our lives to conserve it?

On a global scale, only a small percentage of water is available to us for use. Only 3% of the world's water is fresh, and 80% is frozen at the poles. Of the remaining 1%, 99.5% of THAT is unavailable because it is too far underground, polluted, or trapped in the soil. Meaning, .003% of Earth's fresh water is available for humans to use! In other words, if all of the world's water fit into a gallon jug, only 1 drop would be accessible freshwater that has to be split between all of the animals, humans, and plants throughout the world.

What are some simple things we can do to conserve water in our homes?

- Instead of pouring water down the drain, find a purpose for it. Use it to water your indoor plants or garden.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes **2,700 gallons** of water per year!
- Try turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth, washing your face, or shaving.
- Instead of using running water to thaw foods, defrost food overnight in the refrigerator, or use the defrost setting on your microwave.
- Make sure your home is leak-free. When you are certain no water is being used in your home, take a reading of the water meter. Wait 30 minutes and then take a second reading. If the meter reading changes, you have a leak!
- In your landscaping, try planting grasses and plants that are native to our area; native species usually require less water and fertilizers than non-native species.
- If replacing toilets or showerheads, consider installing models that use less water.
- Consider using a rain barrel; they collect the water coming from your gutters during rainfall. This water can then be used to water your lawn or wash your car.