

# Toilet Leaks: Money “Down the Drain”



## Fun Facts

- “Leaks” don’t necessarily mean a mess on the floor! Toilets can **leak water** through the tank into the bowl! Sometimes silently!
- Toilets account for **30%** of indoor water use, that percent increases if there is a leak.
- Older toilets can use 3.5, 5, or 7 **gallons of water with every flush**.
- Federal plumbing standards now specify that new toilets can only use up to **1.6 gallons per flush (GPF)**, and there are high efficiency toilets that use only 1.28 GPF.
- Toilet leaks can **start and stop!** Just because you can’t hear it now, doesn’t mean it isn’t running while you’re away or asleep.

## How to check for leaks

**Sometimes** it’s easy to detect a leak, because you can **hear water** running in the tank. **Other times**, there is water **silently flowing** through the tank. This technique is helpful for **detecting silent** leaks and also for determining if the toilet is leaking while **you’re away** from home.

- 1) Remove the toilet tank lid.
- 2) Drop a dye tablet or 10 drops of food coloring into the water in the tank. Dye tablet leak kits can be obtained for free at City Hall!
- 3) Put the lid back on. **DO NOT FLUSH.**
- 4) Check after 15 minutes, overnight, or when you return home. If there is dye in the bowl, there is a leak.
- 5) Flush toilet to avoid staining.

## Just how bad could it be?

Scenario: Your 1.5 gallon per flush toilet takes 30 seconds for the tank to fill and has a faulty flapper that didn’t seal and you’re on vacation for the next 2 weeks.

1.5 gallons/30 seconds = 3 Gallons/Minute

1,440 Minutes/Day = 4,320 Gallons/Day

**4,320 Gallons/Day = 60,480 Gallons in just 2 Weeks!!!**

Sources: [www.conserveh2o.org](http://www.conserveh2o.org) - [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense)



## So you have a leak, now what?

### 1) Check the float and fill valve.

If the float is set too high, water could be running into the overflow tube. Make sure the float is free of holes and rising properly.

### 2) Test the flapper.

Check that it isn’t warped or cracked. Check the chain to make sure it isn’t too tight. These could prevent the flapper from sealing properly.

### 3) Replace the assembly.

If the float or flapper do not seem to be the problem and the toilet is still leaking, replacing the entire assembly in the tank may be necessary.

### 4) Call a plumber.

If at any point you feel overwhelmed or are unable to determine or fix the leak yourself, call a licensed plumber.