CONSERVING WATER IN THE HOME

Using a Dishwasher

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A relatively small volume of water is used to complete a cycle in dishwashers. Most dishwashers fill with 2 or 3 gallons of water during each cycle. Depending on the cycle you select for washing or rinsing, the dishwasher fills and drains 4 or 5 times using from 12 to 16 gallons of water during the complete cycle time. This amount of water is continually recirculated through the spray-wash arms and filter system of the appliance to clean the dishes.

Many people have found that one running will do the day's dishes. This means dirty dishes, glasses, snack plates, pots and pans, and preparation utensils can be put into the dishwasher until there are enough accumulated for a full load.

This reduces the use of water, since less is used to run the dishwasher once a day than would be needed when clutter is washed by hand frequently throughout the day, usually under constantly running water. Many people use more than 15 gallons of water in hand washing dishes for just one meal.

It takes just as much water to run the washer empty as full. Good machine loading practices will assure proper circulation of spray for effective cleaning. Look for loading instructions in the use and care manual for your particular model. Improper loading and overloading can cause poor cleaning, and dishes may have to be rewashed—which uses more human energy as well as electrical energy and water.

One portion of the dishwashing task that can be eliminated is the pre-rinse of dishes before loading the machine if you run the dishwasher through a *full cycle* (a short, water-conserving cycle will not remove food left on dishes). Also, as long as you plan to run the dishwasher relatively soon after loading, you don't have to wash the dishes first. With continued mechanical improvements in machines and technological improvements in detergents, less and less preparation is needed, saving you the extra work and using less water and power to get the job done.

Waste Disposal

If you own a waste food disposer, become conscious of the times you run it. Cold water is used in operating a disposer so that fat particles will solidify and be chopped and flushed away into the sewer system. It is estimated that for normal use of the disposer, the average water usage per person/per day is 1.5 gallons.

Revised by Mary Ann Sward, Extension housing specialist, Oregon State University.

	Household tasks									
	Shower	Brush teeth	Tub bath	Shave	Wash dishes	Auto. dish.	Wash hands	Flush toilet	Wash. mach.	Water yard
Normal use	water running	tap running	full	tap running	tap running	full cycle	tap running	dep. on tank size	full cyc. max. wtr.	avg. hose
gal.	25	10	36	20	30	16	2	5-7	60	10 /min.
Conserv. use	wet down, soap up, rinse off	wet brush, rinse	min. wtr. level	fill basin	wash, rinse in pan, sink	short cycle*	fill basin	use tank dsplcmt bottles	short cycle, min. wtr.	lowest priority, omit
gal.	4	1/2	10-12	1	5	7	1	4-6	27	

Figures supplied by American Waterworks Association.
*Requires pre-rinse of dishes.

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Remember that waste food disposers are made to operate with the water running. Operating the machine without running water will ruin it. If you are serious about not using water, then dispose of food wastes by other means. Careful planning can help eliminate some of the waste from the start.

One way to simplify cleanup is to peel vegetables, eggs, or other food onto newspaper, wrap the paper around the food waste, and then dispose of the package in the garbage container. This will save you the work of scraping peelings out of the sink or off the counter after the preparation job is done. It will save water because you don't have to operate the disposer. This might be a good time to consider starting a compost pile if you have available outdoor space.

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