

Water Quality and Conservation Program



Greywater Tips for Residents

What is Greywater?

Greywater is water from your bathroom sinks, showers, tubs, and washing machines. Greywater may contain traces of dirt, food, grease, hair, and certain household cleaning products. It differs from blackwater which refers to water that has come into contact with faeces, either from the toilet or from washing nappies.



It is estimated that over 50% of the water used within the home could be recycled as greywater.

Advantages of recycling greywater include:

- Reduced water bills.
- Reduced demand on scheme water.
- Irrigating the garden during drought or water restrictions.
- Reduces costs for new infrastructure for water supply and wastewater treatment.
- Decreases demand on infrastructure for sewage transport, treatment and disposal.

How much wastewater do I produce?

The table below highlights the approximate wastewater produced by one person each day in an average home with average water fixtures (WELS 3 star). www.yourhome.gov.au/water/wastewater-reuse

Wastewater type	Wastewater source	L/person/day
Blackwater	Toilet	20
Greywater	Shower	63
	Hand basin	6
	Washing machine	13
	Laundry tap	2
Other wastewater	Kitchen tap	12
	Dishwasher	5
TOTAL greywater		84 (approx. 70%)
TOTAL wastewater		121

Do I need council approval?

Council approval will be required for the installation of a treated or untreated greywater system. Please check with your local council before going ahead.

Should my greywater be treated?

❖ Untreated greywater

If your only uses for greywater will be outside the home, then your greywater will not need to be treated.

Untreated greywater can refer to the manual bucketing or diversion piping of water collected from showers or washing machines to your garden or lawns. Other systems can include the use of filters, pumps and irrigation systems to deliver the water more effectively.



Your untreated greywater can only be used outside the home and cannot be stored, due to the potential growth of bacteria and other pathogens. Untreated greywater must not escape from your property into the neighbouring one; or into stormwater systems or aquifers used for drinking water (this is illegal).

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❖ Treated greywater

If you intend to use your greywater inside the home, then it will need to be treated.

Treated greywater generally carries lower health risks for both your family and the environment than untreated greywater. However, greywater treatment systems can be expensive to set up and maintain.

Depending on the type of treatment system you install, it can be used for a range of purposes, including garden watering, toilet flushing and in the laundry. A key benefit of a treated greywater system is the ability to store the water and use it when needed as opposed to having to use it immediately.

How do I reduce the risks associated with greywater?

Actions that you can take to make sure that the greywater that you produce has a reduced risk include:

- Use only low risk sources of greywater such as water from the shower, bath and laundry (kitchen sink has a higher level of organics and potential pathogens).
- Do not use greywater on vegetables.
- Do not use greywater if any member of your family is ill.
- Do not allow your pets to drink greywater and keep your children away from garden areas that have recently been irrigated.
- Make sure that your system is installed by a licenced plumber that specialises in greywater systems.

How do I maintain my greywater system?

- ❖ **Regular maintenance** is needed to ensure that your greywater system is safe for all requirements around the home, particularly if you have opted for use inside the home.
- ❖ **Untreated** greywater systems have very little maintenance besides removing blockages as they occur.
- ❖ **Treated** greywater systems require ongoing maintenance. Depending on the type of system that has been installed, maintenance may include:
 - Regular cleaning or periodic replacement of filters.
 - Periodic de-sledging of treatment tank.
 - Manual diversion of greywater to sewer in winter.
 - Flushing of sub-surface irrigation lines.
 - Occasional replacement of pumps and the periodic testing of soil pH.



Are there any rebates available?

There are currently no State government rebates for WA residents for installing a greywater system.

Some local councils, particularly in new developments, may offer residents sustainability rebates or rates offsets for the installation of sustainable products including greywater systems.

Contact your local council to find out if they offer any rebates or incentives.