

Tips For Solving Toilet Leak Problems

Toilets account for approximately 30 percent of a home's indoor water consumption and they are often the main source of household leaks. Most toilet leak problems can be easy and inexpensive to repair with a quick trip to the hardware store.



How to know if your toilet is leaking

All you need is a dye tablet or a little food coloring (red or green works best).

Instructions:

1. Remove the lid off the toilet and add a few drops of food coloring or a dye tablet into the tank. Do Not flush the toilet.
2. Try to wait overnight or if possible, 24 hours before flushing. If the color appears in the toilet bowl without flushing, it has a leak. You may end the test at any point if you see color in the bowl to avoid staining the inside of the toilet.

Note: Since a toilet can run intermittently, it is recommended to do this test three to five days consecutively before ruling out a potential toilet leak.

Common Causes of Toilet Leaks

There are a number of possible causes for water leaks in the toilet. The most common toilet leaks are caused by the flapper not sealing correctly or the fill valve malfunctioning.

Old, worn out toilet **flappers** are often the cause of toilet leaks. Look inside the tank and you will see a rubber stop at the bottom of the tank. This is called a flapper which creates a watertight seal. Over time, a flapper can deteriorate and become warped causing it to no longer seal properly letting water seep into the toilet bowl. You may or may not hear the water cut on and off because water is draining into the bowl causing the tank to have to fill back up.



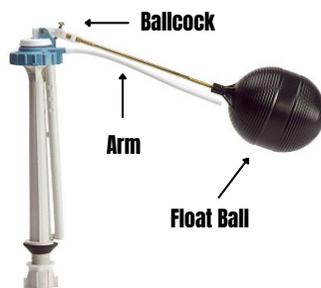
A deteriorated or damaged **flush valve seat** located at the bottom of the tank will also cause a bad seal between the seat and the flapper. This may cause water to run continuously.

A **chain** or flapper hinge malfunction can cause the flapper to get hung in an open position letting water flow continuously until the flapper is closed and sealed properly.

Another common type of toilet leak is caused by an improperly adjusted or broken **fill valve**. The fill valve brings water into the toilet tank and has a float attached to it. If the float is set too high or if the fill valve fails to completely close, water will continue to enter the tank and flow into the overflow tube.



You can simply remove the lid and see if the water is flowing into the overflow tube when the tank is full. If so, adjust the float cup by moving it down the rod until the water level is at least a half inch from the top of the overflow tube.



Your toilet may have a **float ball** attached to a metal arm. This works similar to the float cup fill valve. In this case, the water level can be lowered by bending the float arm slightly downward.



If you have a pressure assist toilet, you may want to contact a certified plumber to check for possible issues as this system is a little more complex.

Other Toilet Leak Issues

Other possible toilet leaks can occur between the tank and the bowl. Check the **tank-to-bowl gasket** and the two bolts that attach the tank to the bowl. The gasket or the rubber around the bolts can deteriorate with age. The water leak will occur on the exterior of the toilet and leak onto the floor.

Leaks can occur between the connection at the toilet base and the floor. The **wax seal** in the base of the toilet can break down over time and lose its seal letting water leak onto the floor. The bolts that attach the toilet to floor can become loose and cause this issue as well.

Cracks in the toilet porcelain or defective water supply lines can also be a cause of external toilet water leaks.