



How to Fix a Leaking Toilet

Most toilet leaks are caused by a leaking flapper. This is easy to fix and you can do it. (Make sure a grown up reads these instructions and says it's OK for you to do this.)

1. Turn off the **valve** leading to the bottom of the toilet. Be gentle, it's a small valve and you don't want to break it.
2. Remove the **lid** of the toilet **tank** and set it aside. The lid is heavy and if you drop it, it could break, and so could your foot!
3. Flush the toilet to empty the water from the tank.
4. Play a bit by pushing the **flush lever**, and seeing how far the **flapper** opens. This will help you later when you are putting things back together.

The water in the **tank** is clean. It has come straight from the water supply in your house. From the **tank** it goes into the **bowl**. Then it's not clean anymore!

5. Disconnect the **chain** from the **flush lever**.
6. Pull the **flapper valve** off the **pegs** or **ears**, and set it aside to look at later. It is probably hard and cracked. When you are done admiring the old one, you can throw it out.
7. Wipe the **seat** of the **flush valve**. That is the edges of the pipe where the **flapper** was sitting. Make sure there is no old rubber or other crumbs there, so the new **flapper** won't leak.
 - If you live in an area with a lot of iron or calcium in the water, there may be **scale** inside the tank. If the scale is flaking off, it can catch between the **flapper** and the **seat**, allowing the water to leak out. Brush off and remove any loose scale.
 - Remove any bits of the old gasket or other crumbs or grit that may be in the **tank**.





8. Install the new **flapper** on the **pegs**.
9. Connect the **chain** to the **flush lever**. Check the length of the **chain**. When you push the **lever** to flush the toilet, does the **flapper** lift right up? When it's closed is the **chain** slightly loose? Then you are almost done.
10. Turn the **tap** back on (gently).
11. Let the toilet **tank** fill. Then test to see if the leak is fixed:
 - Put a dye tablet or a couple drops of food coloring into the water in the tank. If you are using food coloring, try to get it **ONLY** in the tank, not on your clothes, the bath mat and your face.
 - Leave the toilet sit without flushing for ten minutes or so.
 - If color from the dye or food coloring appears in the **bowl**, you still have a leak.
 - If you still have a leak, double check that the **flapper** and **chain** are both attached properly. If they are, it's time to call in reinforcements, because this leak will be harder to fix.
12. If the leak is fixed **CONGRATULATIONS**. You are now saving "buckets" of water. A leak you can hear can be going through hundreds of litres of water a day.
13. Wait, you aren't quite done. Carefully set the **lid** back on the **tank**, throw away the old **flapper**, and tidy up your work space.

