

## Combating the Battle of Dry, Winter Air

The cooler weather is here, and so too is drier, indoor air, which can leave you with dry skin and hair, a dry cough, or worse, respiratory illness. For tips on how to keep moisture in the air this winter, read on.

- **Use a humidifier**, which will release moisture into the air, making it feel warmer, and thus less reliant on your heater (which will dry the air even more).
- **Schedule an annual HVAC checkup** for optimal efficiency to help regulate humidity.
- **Seal any leaks** around windows and doors to minimize heat loss, so you don't have to turn up the heat as much.
- **Cook on your stove top**, which releases moisture into the air, whereas the oven will do the opposite.
- **Hang clothes to dry**, as the moisture will evaporate into the air.
- **Embrace house plants**. Plants release water vapour, increasing the indoor humidity.



- **Open the windows a smidge**, even if just for a few minutes. The fresh air will help push the stale, dry air out.
- **Let bath water cool** before draining, to help add moisture to the air.

With some proactive steps, you don't have to be defenceless against dry air, and can make it just a little easier to breathe this winter.



## Sip Safely: Keeping Your Drinking Water Clean

Turning on the tap can be something we don't often give much thought. But for any number of reasons, there could be contaminants in your water. Here are some helpful tips to ensure your drinking water is safe.

**Test your water annually**, or if you notice changes in taste, colour or odour, test immediately to determine if it's contaminated. Testing is especially important if you live in an older house which may have lead pipes, or if you have a private well, both of which make you more vulnerable to contaminated water.

After testing your water, choose a **water filtration system that targets any contaminants which may have been found**. There are a variety of systems on the market ranging from inexpensive water filter pitchers to refrigerator water filters, under-sink filters, as well as whole-house filters, which filter water to every faucet.

It is also important to **maintain your plumbing**. Fix any leaks immediately, replace outdated or damaged plumbing components, and if you have lead pipes, consider replacing them, as they are a common source of contaminants.

Lastly, **never pour hazardous substances like cleaning products down the drain**, as this could get into your water supply.

## Protecting Your Home From Water Damage

While water is life, it can also wreak havoc on your home. There are many ways to prevent that from happening, such as:

1. Know where the water shut-off valve is and how to turn it off in the event of a leak.
2. Install water leak detectors to alert you of a leak.
3. Proactively check for leaks under sinks, around the dishwasher, washing machine and toilets.
4. Never leave the dishwasher or washing machine running when you are not at home.
5. Don't pour grease down the drains. This can clog drains and eventually cause a leak.
6. Avoid distractions when filling the sink or bathtub.
7. Inspect your roof regularly for damage and look for stains on ceilings or walls.
8. Clean your gutters at least once a year to prevent blockages that can cause water damage.
9. If you have a sump pump, have it serviced annually.
10. Insulate exposed pipes in cold climates and ensure a temperature of 15°C / 59°F minimum is always maintained to prevent pipes from bursting.



11. Shut off your water supply while on vacation.

Water damage often starts small, and if not attended to right away, can turn into a domino effect of damage. So save yourself the headache and take the time to be proactive.