



Greywater use around the home

What is greywater?

Greywater can be a valuable water resource in dry periods but its reuse can also carry health and environmental risks.

Greywater is all non-toilet household wastewater (i.e., from showers, baths, spas, hand basins, washing machines, laundry troughs, dishwashers and kitchen sinks). Its quality can vary from household to household. We don't recommend reusing kitchen water (from sinks and dishwashers), as it contains food particles, grease, oils and fats.

A number of products are now on the market that enable you to reuse greywater from your domestic plumbing. These products are designed for immediate greywater reuse by diverting it away from your sewage outlets.

Untreated greywater – how can I use it?

You can use untreated greywater for garden watering by either of these methods:

- directly diverting greywater from the laundry trough, washing machine, hand basin, shower and/or bath via a diversion device and hose
- carrying it in a bucket.

The dos and don'ts opposite relate to the use of untreated greywater.

For a simple greywater diversion system you do not need council or EPA approval, but you must have it installed by a licensed plumber.



How can I use treated greywater?

A number of systems on the market can treat greywater for a range of uses, from garden watering to toilet flushing.

If you intend to install a permanent treatment system for greywater you will need approval from your local council. To find out more:

- download EPA's *Code of practice: Onsite wastewater management* (publication 891) from www.epa.vic.gov.au/publications
- contact your local council for approval requirements
- ensure you use a licensed plumber to install your greywater system.

For further information please go to www.epa.vic.gov.au/water.

Greywater Dos

- ✔ Reuse wastewater from baths, showers, hand basins and washing machines (preferably the final rinse water).
- ✔ Only apply as much greywater on the garden as the soil can absorb and rotate the areas you irrigate.
- ✔ Wash your hands after watering with greywater.
- ✔ Use environmentally friendly shampoos, detergents and cleaning products to better protect your soil and plants.
- ✔ Stop using greywater if plants appear to become unhealthy or odours are generated.



Wastewater from showers can be reused.

Greywater Don'ts

- ✘ Water vegetable gardens if the crop is to be eaten raw or uncooked.
- ✘ Use kitchen wastewater (including from dishwashers), due to the high concentration of food wastes and chemicals that are not readily broken down by soil organisms.
- ✘ Let children or pets drink or play with greywater.
- ✘ Use greywater that has faecal contamination, such as from washing nappies or soiled sheets.
- ✘ Store greywater for more than 24 hours, or store in rainwater tanks.
- ✘ Allow greywater to flow from your property or enter stormwater drains.



Don't reuse kitchen wastewater, due to the high concentrations of food wastes and chemicals.

More information

For specific information on:

- regulatory, health and environmental issues associated with household wastewater, download EPA's *Guidelines for Environmental Management: Onsite wastewater management* (publication 891) from

www.epa.vic.gov.au/publications

- greywater and your health, download the guidance *Greywater recycling: Appropriate uses* (you can find the PDF file of this publication by searching the website for 'greywater') from

www.health.vic.gov.au

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