

Choosing Your Filter

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Homeowners are beginning to carefully consider the quality of their drinking water. Many people are looking to bottled water as an alternative. Unfortunately, bottled water is expensive and much less convenient than water delivered directly to the kitchen sink. And there are no guarantees about the quality of bottled water either.

It is possible, however, to get freshly filtered water straight from the tap. Since the quality of water varies depending upon its source, a variety of home water filters are available to meet your individual requirements. They are easy to install and maintain, and may be just what you need to ease your mind about the quality of your family's water.

Lowe's is happy to provide this information as a service to you.



Contaminants – What type of protection do you need?

Water contaminants can be broken down into four categories: Taste and odor causing contaminants, rust/sediment, bacteria/parasites and lead. Your water may, or may not, suffer from any of these contaminants. If you are concerned about the quality of your water, you may want to have it tested by an independent laboratory. The filtration system you need for your home depends upon the quality of your water supply. Water filters do require some maintenance, and cartridges should be changed according to the manufacturers recommendations.

Taste and Odor Causing Contaminants—If your water smells or tastes bad, there is little doubt that you would benefit from a water filter. Municipal water often smells of chlorine which is used to treat the water. Well water, which is dependent upon many local conditions affecting the water supply, may also smell bad. Water filters often treat these conditions by the use of “Granular Activated Carbon,” a substance which absorbs contaminants that would otherwise cause offensive tastes and odors.

Filters which use granulated active carbon (GAC) may cause cloudy water for the first couple of weeks after a filter change. This is a harmless condition caused by the release of air from the GAC and can be reduced by running the water for several seconds before each use until the air is flushed out.

Rust and Sediment—You may notice visible particles in your water; sediment may be seen collecting in the bottom of your dishwasher or commode, for example. Larger particles may collect behind the screens of your faucet aerator. Smaller particles may collect at the bottom of a glass of water that sits for a time. Rust and sediment are easily collected by particulate filters. Whole house particulate filters can be easily installed to protect not only your drinking water, but also appliances such as dishwashers and ice makers.

Water filters are not effective against clear water iron, which can leave red stains in tubs and toilets. To treat this substance, a water softener is required.

Bacteria/Parasites—If your house relies on a well, your water is more likely to be contaminated by bacteria and parasites. Many bacteria and parasites occur naturally in clear water supplies, others are the result of water supply contamination by sewage and wastes. Some bacteria and parasites affect the taste and smell of the water, but others do not. Cysts, such as Cryptosporidium and Giardia, are particularly hearty parasites and have been known to contaminate even chlorinated municipal water supplies. They can cause illness and are a serious hazard to the young, elderly or those with immune deficiencies. Water filters are available with various filter cartridges which are effective against many of these contaminants.

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Contaminants – What type of protection do you need? (Cont.)

Lead—contained in water is tasteless and odorless, but should be avoided as much as possible. It can be most effectively removed from your drinking and cooking water by installing a lead filter directly under the sink in your kitchen. This filter placement assures that even if you have lead in the pipes of your home, it will be removed from your drinking water.

What Types of Filters are Available?

There are several types of water filtration systems available. Homeowners should be able to install the units described in this article simply by following the manufacturers installation instructions. Choose the system that meets your needs based upon the contaminants you are trying to remove. Be aware, however, that although the countertop and faucet-mounted filters are easiest to install initially, they are more bulky and less convenient than the hidden undersink filter. They are also less versatile if you are attempting to filter contaminants other than tastes, smells and lead.

Whole House Filters—Whole house filters are available and easy to install. They are placed in the main water line entering your home and are designed to remove sediment and rust particles from all of the water entering your home. They can also benefit the other types of water filters by acting as a particulate prefilter.

Undersink Filters—Different varieties of undersink filters are available and should be chosen depending upon your home's individual needs. Some of these filters remove bad tastes and odors only. Others may also remove lead, bacteria and sediment, or any combination of the four. These units may have multiple cartridges, each designed to filter a particular type of contaminant.

Undersink filters are convenient because, once installed, you don't even know they are there--turn on the water, and automatically filtered water comes straight from the faucet. They are also efficient because they allow you to highly filter only the water going to a specific faucet, thereby reducing the demands on the filter cartridges. You don't need to filter your bath water to remove a chlorine taste, for example, but you may certainly want to remove it from your drinking water. Undersink filters are also helpful if your plumbing is joined with lead solder. By being in line immediately before the faucet, undersink filters provide maximum filtration protection.

Faucet-mounted Filters—These filters connect directly to the faucet and require no plumbing connections. Some models are designed simply to remove bad tastes and odors, while more sophisticated units now have lead and cyst filtering capabilities. The advantage of these filters is that they are small and very easy to install and remove. Also, they filter the water at the point of use. The disadvantage is that they are a highly visible attachment to your faucet. Compared to more expensive and versatile undersink filters, they provide limited filtration.

Countertop or Canisters Filters—These are the simplest water filters available. They are countertop appliances, like toasters, and can filter drinking water for different contaminants. The disadvantage of these filters is that, unlike undersink filters, their use is not transparent. Some of these filters must remain on your counter, some require connection to your spigot, and some require that water be poured through them--sort of like a drip coffee maker.

Installing Water Filters

Skill Level: Intermediate

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Clean water is something most of us take for granted, but should we? Every day the list of water systems with contaminants above federally mandated safety levels grows. Whether you are on a municipal system or private well, there is a simple, easy way to ensure that your family is getting the best water possible. Install your own water filter and rest easy knowing your home is protected. Most home owners should be able to complete this basic project in less than a day, using common household tools. Lowe's is happy to provide this information as a service to you.

Tools & Materials

Tools

- Hacksaw
- Adjustable wrench
- Screwdriver

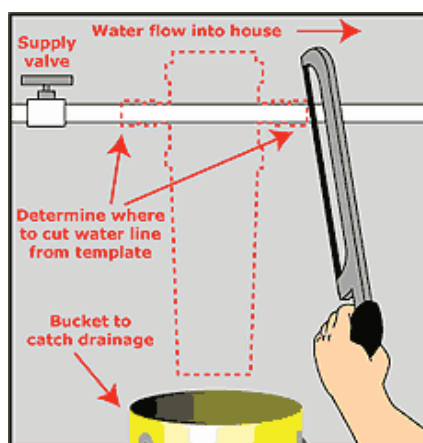
Materials

- All materials needed are supplied with the filter kit.

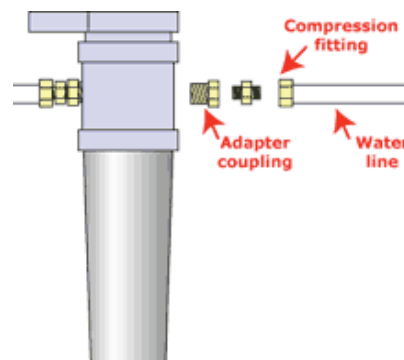
Installing a Whole House Water Filter

Whole house water filters filter out sediment and rust in your water supply. Filtering out these impurities not only makes your water healthier, it also protects your appliances and lengthens the life of your plumbing system.

Good idea: Purchase a filter with a by-pass built in so you don't have to turn off the water to change filters.



cutting the pipe



attaching the fittings

1. Turn off the water at the main supply line to your home and drain the cold water from the plumbing system.
2. Locate an area in the main supply to install the filter. Be sure to choose a location in the line before the water enters your water heater and in a place that is easily accessible for changing filters.
3. Use the template provided to cut the water line and make room for the filter in the system. Have a bucket ready to catch any water that may spill from the pipes.
4. Install the adapter couplings in the inlet and outlet sides of the filter. Install the compression fittings supplied with the filter on the cut water lines and secure the fittings to the filter couplings. Be sure that the water is coming into the inlet side of the filter.
5. Secure the filter to the wall with the mount provided. Turn the main water supply back on and check for leaks.

Installing Water Filters

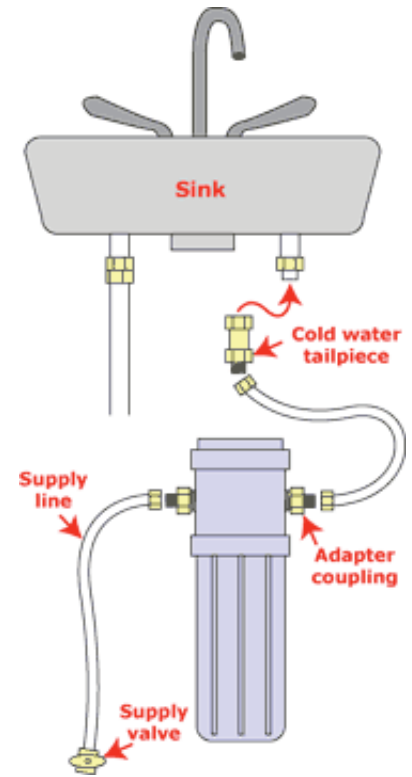
Skill Level: Intermediate

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Installing an Under-Sink Water Filter

Under-sink filters are good for filtering drinking and cooking water at the point of use. Under sink filters can reduce chlorine and sulfur odors as well as lead and other impurities from your water. They are most effective when used in conjunction with whole house filters.

1. Turn off the cold water to the sink at the shutoff valve. Disconnect the supply line from the cold water tailpiece on the faucet and drain the water into a bucket.
2. Install the adapters into the inlet and outlet on the filter. Attach the old supply line to the filter's inlet valve. Attach the outlet valve to the cold water tailpiece using the couplings and tubing provided with the filter.
3. Secure the filter to the back of the cabinet with the mount and hardware in the kit. Turn the water back on at the shutoff valve and check for leaks.



under sink installation