

Cleaning Your Aerators

What are aerators and when should they be cleaned?

There are screens on faucets called aerators. Aerators help keep pieces of lead and other particles from getting into your water. Clean your drinking water faucet aerator at least every six months. If there is construction or repairs to the public water system or pipes near your home, clean your drinking water faucet aerator every month until the work is done.

Follow the steps below to clean your aerators:



1

- The small round piece on the bottom of your faucet is the aerator (pronounced: air-raytor).
- Unscrew the aerator from the bottom of the faucet.
- You should be able to unscrew it with your fingers, but you might need a wrench if it's stuck.



2

- Your aerator might not look the same as this, but it's okay.
- Now that the aerator is off, let's clean it.



3

- While you only need to use water to rinse off your aerator, these things might make it easier to clean it:
 - An old toothbrush
 - A glass of vinegar



4

- Soaking the aerator in vinegar will loosen some of the grime. You can soak it as long as you want, but even five minutes will help.
- The toothbrush makes it easy to scrub the inside. Don't use that toothbrush for brushing your teeth again.



5

A

- If your aerator looks like Photo A, it has a flow control piece. You'll have to take it apart:
 - Pull out the pieces carefully.
 - Note the order that the pieces come out. You'll have to put them back in the same way. It may help to take a picture or write down some notes.
- If your aerator looks like Photo B, go to Step 6.



B



6

- You might not have all of these pieces. They might not be this color. Every aerator is a little different.
- Scrub all of the pieces. Make sure you get down inside the metal piece, removing any bits of grime or metal flakes you see.



7

- Rinse everything very well.
- Run water through the aerator screen - holding it right side up and upside down.



8

- Once it's clean,
 - If your aerator looks like Photo A in step 5, put it back together.
 - If it looks like Photo B, you're all set.



9

- Put the aerator back on your faucet.
- Repeat these steps at least every six months. Cleaning removes pieces of lead or other particles from your aerator and stops them from getting into your water.

For more information call the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) at 800-648-6942 or visit [Michigan.gov/mileadsafe](https://www.michigan.gov/mileadsafe).