

## Water - The Miracle Molecule

Each molecule of water is made up of three atoms. Two hydrogen atoms bonded to one oxygen atom. That's all water is. Without this 3-atom combination, we would not be here since two-thirds of both our planet and our bodies are composed of it. We often take our fresh, safe water supply for granted, but we can help make sure it lasts a long, long time. As a homeowner, here are some things you can do to help:

- Install low-flow toilets, shower heads and faucets.
- Take shorter showers.
- Fill the sink rather than letting water run while washing hands or shaving.
- Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket.
- Repair leaking faucets and running toilets immediately.
- Run washing machines and dishwashers only with a full load.
- Don't run water continuously while washing vegetables and dishes.
- Water lawns in the early morning to avoid evaporation.
- Plant native or drought-tolerant plants.
- Use mulch or ground coverings to reduce evaporation and runoff.
- Use a broom to clear off walkways, patios and other outdoor areas.
- Use automatic shutoff nozzles on hoses when washing cars or working in the garden instead of letting the hose run continuously.

Water conservation is a good reason to buy a new home. Remember that most new homes use less water because they are equipped with fixtures that would be considered "conservation measures" if they were installed in existing homes. In addition, manufacturers have begun to design appliances with shorter cycles, adjustable water levels and water recycling features. These features can reduce water use by as much as 40 percent.

Ask your builder what kind of fixtures is in your home. Chances are, you can request products that can help you save water. And don't forget that when you save water, you will save money since you pay for the water you use and the fuel to heat it.

Contact the Wilmington-Cape Fear Home Builders Association at (910)799-2611 <http://www.wilmingtonhomebuilders.com> for a list of builders or remodelers who offer water-conservation fixtures and appliances.