

Blocked drains



How to prevent, spot and unblock it



How to spot it

- Slow draining water (or not draining away at all)
- Nasty smells
- Unusual gurgling noises

How to unblock it



- Check the drain – wear a pair of rubber gloves and feel around the plughole and drain cover to see if you can safely remove any blockages. If the drain is outside, leaves or other garden debris may have become stuck.
- Reach for a plunger - vigorously plunge it up and down a few times to move whatever may be blocking the drain. Run a small amount of water to see if you've fixed the issue.
- Go natural - you may want to avoid chemical drain unblockers and try a more natural solution first. Running hot water down the sink can melt away a blockage if it's caused by grease. You can also use a plastic bottle to flush away softer blockages: simply fill it with water, squeeze it to force water down the drain and see if it removes the obstruction. Also, a mix of baking soda and vinegar poured down the drain causes a fizzing chemical reaction and can dissolve blockages.
- Use a chemical drain unblocker - where manual and natural methods don't work, a chemical drain unblocker may fix the issue.

How to prevent it

- Clean plugholes and drains regularly - making sure any food or waste is removed from your sinks is one of the easiest ways of preventing problems. Outside drains can become blocked with garden waste like leaves and twigs. A good pair of rubber gloves will make the drain clearing process much more pleasant.
- Use drain covers - try using these to catch debris before it gets washed down the drain.
- Watch what you wash away - as a general rule, only wash water soluble liquids down your drains or sinks. Letting grease or oil go down drains runs the risk of it solidifying and eventually stopping water flowing.



Top tip

Strain any oil and reuse it for cooking or let it cool and solidify and scrape it into a container that can be thrown away. Once you've removed most of the grease, use kitchen roll to wipe any leftover bits off pans and dishes before washing them in the sink.

If these methods don't work, a professional plumber could help you fix the issue.

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