

FREE GUIDE

The Clogged Drain Troubleshooting Flowchart

Toilet, sink, tub, shower, floor drain: what to try, in order

- ✓ Main line vs. single drain test
- ✓ Fixes for every fixture
- ✓ What never to mix or pour
- ✓ When to stop and call



Start here: is it one drain or the whole house?

Is more than one drain slow or backing up?

YES

Stop using water. Likely your main sewer line. Call a plumber.

NO

Does water rise in the tub when you flush?

YES

Main line: call a plumber.

NO

Single-drain clog: DIY. Use the fixture page.

SAFETY FIRST

Solid object down the drain (toy, phone, cap)? Don't plunge or blast it; you can wedge it deeper. Fish it out or call a plumber.

Toilet

- 1 Close the valve behind the toilet. Don't flush again.
- 2 Flange plunger, cup under water: slow push, then 10–15 firm pumps.
- 3 Dish soap + a bucket of hot (not boiling) water; wait 15–20 min.
- 4 Toilet auger, or air-pressure drain opener with the toilet head.
- 5 Still stuck, or other drains affected → plumber.

Bathroom sink

- 1 Pull and clean the pop-up stopper (hair!).
- 2 Plastic barbed snake to pull hair.
- 3 **Wet rag in the overflow hole**, then plunge or use air pressure.
- 4 Bucket under the P-trap; unscrew, empty, rinse, refit hand-tight.

Kitchen sink

- 1 Disposal? Power off, press the reset button, free it with the hex key.
- 2 **Plug the other basin** (and hold the dishwasher hose side).
- 3 Plunge, or air-pressure opener with a sink head.
- 4 Dish soap + very hot water for grease; repeat twice.
- 5 Clear the trap.

Shower & bathtub

- 1 Remove the cover or stopper; pull the hair mat.
- 2 Tub: **seal the overflow plate** with a wet rag or tape.
- 3 Leave an inch of water; plunge or use air pressure with the cone head.
- 4 Fit a hair catcher so it doesn't come back.

Floor drain

- 1 Lift the grate; clear debris; pour in a bucket of water.
- 2 Slow to drain = local clog: snake or air pressure.
- 3 Water coming UP out of it = main line. Stop and call.

Never do this

Don't	Why
Mix drain chemicals, or add anything after one	Toxic gas, heat and caustic splash
Plunge or blast after using chemical cleaner	Sprays caustic water at you
Pour boiling water in a toilet or PVC	Cracks porcelain, softens joints
Use a coat hanger in a toilet	Scratches the bowl, can't reach the trap
Keep flushing a slow toilet	Overflow



DRAIN GURU TIP

An air-pressure drain opener with sealed heads covers toilet, sink, tub, shower and floor drain, all the DIY steps in this chart, with no chemicals.

See the Pressure Blaster at drain.guru →

General information only, not professional or legal advice. Plumbing codes, prices and landlord-tenant laws vary by location. For gas, electrical, sewer-line or structural problems, use a licensed professional. Prices shown are commonly quoted US ranges, not quotes.

KEEP ONE UNDER EVERY SINK

One tool for every step marked DIY.

Pump it, seal it, pull the trigger: one burst of stored air through the clog.



- Pump, seal, pull the trigger: one burst of stored air
- Built-in pressure gauge, stainless steel barrel
- Heads for toilets, sinks, tubs, showers and floor drains
- No chemicals, nothing to refill

1 Blaster

\$59.99

2 Blasters

\$79.99

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3 Blasters

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12-Month Drain Maintenance Calendar

Ten minutes a month