



## Find the problem *before* you buy a single part.

Three steps. About a minute of listening and looking, plus a ten-minute dye test. By the end you'll know which side of the tank is causing the trouble. **Most of these are cheap parts and a 30-minute job**, if you know what you're doing.

TOTAL TIME

~ 60 seconds of active diagnosis · plus a 10-minute dye-test wait

### 1 Listen

10 SECONDS

Stand next to the toilet for ten seconds with everything else quiet. What you hear narrows down which side of the tank to look at.

- Constant hiss.** → Points to the fill valve side.
- Water trickling into the bowl.** → Points to the flapper side.
- Cycles on for 10 to 20 seconds every few minutes ("phantom flush").** → Usually a slow flapper leak. Confirm with Step 3.
- High-pitched whine or vibration.** → Fill valve seat. Could be a worn seal or mineral buildup.

### 2 Look

15 SECONDS

Lift the tank lid straight up and set it on a towel. Porcelain chips easy. Check these four things in order.

- Water level.** Should sit ½ inch below the top of the overflow tube. Higher than that, the fill valve isn't shutting off where it should.
- Water flowing into the overflow tube.** → Fill valve side, not flapper.
- Flapper sitting flat on the seat?** If it looks warped, mineral-crusting, or cocked sideways, that's worth a closer look.
- Chain slack.** About ½ inch of slack is the target. Too tight and it holds the flapper open. Too loose and it won't lift. Too long and it gets pinched under the flapper.

### 3 Dye Test

30 SEC + 10 MIN WAIT

This is the definitive flapper test. Do it even if Steps 1 and 2 looked fine. Silent flapper leaks are the most commonly missed problem.

- 1 Drop 5 to 10 drops of food coloring into the tank, not the bowl. Dark color works best. Blue or red.
- 2 Do not flush. Wait 10 minutes.
- 3 Check the bowl.

#### RESULTS

Bowl clear	Flapper is sealing fine. <b>The problem is upstream.</b> Fill valve, float, or overflow height.
Faintly tinted	Slow flapper leak. <b>The flapper is the likely culprit.</b>
Clearly colored	Active flapper leak. <b>The flapper is the culprit.</b>
Same color as the tank	Severe flapper leak. <b>Don't wait on this one.</b>

#### YOU FOUND THE PROBLEM. NOW WHAT?

### The fix is in the guide.

This checklist gets you to the right part. The full guide walks you through the repair with photos, exact part numbers, and the gotchas plumbers know that homeowners don't. Grab it for \$19 pre-launch at [plumbersplaybook.com](https://plumbersplaybook.com).