



# Try changing your Faucet Aerator

## The experience:

Many BJWSA customer contact us to inquire about black and pink "slime," an airborne bacteria found in many Lowcountry kitchens and bathrooms.

One solution is to remove faucet aerators and clean them. Henry donned his plumbing gear and removed the aerator in his kitchen – with help from his Mom.

He then cleaned it and replaced it. You can do that, too, if you find that your aerators need cleaning. It's quite simple!

## Tools:

Pliers or a wrench  
New aerator, in case yours needs replacing  
Aerator key (if you have a recessed aerator)  
Soft cloth

## Directions:

Most faucets have a removable attachment at the end called an aerator. The aerator adds air so the water flows out straight and splashes less.

1. Unscrew the aerator with your hands or, if tight, with pliers or a wrench. Some kinds of faucets have recessed aerators and may require a special tool (aerator key) to remove the aerator. To avoid scratches on your faucet, put some cloth around the aerator, then put the wrench on. Remember, right tighty, lefty loose-y, but since the aerator is upside down, it may feel backwards.

2. Aerators may have a build-up of sediment, scale, or slime. Aerators can also break in place. Depending on the condition, you can clean or replace your aerator. In most cases, a good rinsing is enough to clean an aerator. If there is slime on the aerator, clean it with bleach. If there is scale on the aerator, rinse it with vinegar or something acidic. (BJWSA water is soft and does not form much scale.) If you need to replace the aerator, take the old one with you to a home center or hardware store to get the right replacement. Knowing the faucet brand also helps. Watch out for any washers, O-rings, or gaskets in the aerator assembly.

3. Screw the aerator assembly back into the faucet. Hand tighten. Turn the water on gently to check the seal. If water comes out the sides, check the alignment, realign if necessary, then tighten the aerator further with a wrench.

Your water source, water quality, plumbing, and other factors will determine how frequently the aerators need cleaning.

Watch Henry show you how to change an aerator:

Watch the pros at This Old House show you how to change an aerator [here](#).

