

How to Fix Bad-Smelling Drains (and Prevent Them From Coming Back)

What Causes Bad-Smelling Drains?

Before fixing the issue, it helps to understand what's causing it. Common reasons include:

- Food particles, grease, or soap buildup
- Hair and debris trapped in the drain
- A dry P-trap (which allows sewer gas to enter)
- Bacterial growth inside the pipes
- Venting issues in your plumbing system

Once you know the cause, you can choose the right solution.

Step-by-Step: How to Fix a Smelly Drain

1. Run hot water through the drain

Start by running hot water for 1–2 minutes. This helps loosen grease, soap scum, and other buildup that can cause odors.

2. Clean around the drain opening

Remove the drain cover if possible and wipe away any visible debris, hair, or grime. This is often where odors start forming.

3. Use baking soda and vinegar

A natural cleaning method that works well for mild odors:

- Pour ½ cup of baking soda into the drain
- Follow with 1 cup of white vinegar
- Let it sit for 10–15 minutes
- Flush with hot water

This helps break down buildup and neutralize odors.

4. Check the P-trap under sinks

The P-trap is the curved pipe under your sink that holds water to block sewer gases.

- Place a bucket underneath
- Carefully remove the trap
- Clean out any buildup or sludge
- Reinstall securely

If the trap is dry or clogged, it can easily cause bad smells.

5. Refill dry drains

If a sink or shower hasn't been used in a while, the P-trap may have dried out. Simply run water for 30–60 seconds to restore the water seal and block odors.

6. Clear deeper clogs if needed

If the smell continues, there may be buildup further down the line. A drain snake or auger can help remove deeper blockages.

7. Check for venting issues

If multiple drains in your home smell bad or gurgle, you may have a blocked plumbing vent. This is a more serious issue that typically requires a licensed plumber.

When to Call a Professional Plumber

You should contact a plumber if:

- The smell keeps coming back
- Multiple drains are affected
- Drains are slow or gurgling
- The odor smells like raw sewage

These symptoms often indicate a deeper plumbing issue that DIY methods won't fully resolve.


Preventing Future Drain Odors

To keep your drains smelling fresh:

- Avoid pouring grease down sinks
 - Use drain strainers to catch debris
 - Flush drains with hot water regularly
 - Clean drains monthly with baking soda and vinegar
 - Run water in rarely used sinks and showers
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Need Help With a Smelly Drain?

If you're dealing with persistent drain odors in your home or business, our team is here to help. We provide professional drain cleaning and plumbing services to keep your system running smoothly.

 Call The Dailey Company at 979-260-2020 for fast, reliable service.