

OTTAWA PRO PLUMBING

Kitchens

Sinks, dishwashers, disposals, and kitchen
plumbing rough-ins

5 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

ottawaplumbingpro.ca/construction-brain

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Why is my kitchen sink draining so slowly all of a sudden?

A sudden change in your kitchen sink's drainage typically indicates a **grease buildup or food debris blockage** in the drain line. Unlike gradual slowdowns that develop over time, sudden drainage issues usually point to a specific obstruction that's formed recently.

The most common culprit is **grease and fat accumulation**. When hot grease goes down the drain, it cools and solidifies in your pipes, creating a sticky trap for food particles, soap residue, and other debris. This buildup can reach a tipping point where it suddenly restricts water flow significantly. Coffee grounds, rice, pasta, and fibrous vegetables are particularly problematic as they don't break down easily and can create dense clogs when combined with grease.

Garbage disposal issues can also cause sudden drainage problems. If your disposal isn't grinding food completely, larger particles can accumulate in the P-trap or further down the line. Additionally, if the disposal's drain connection has loosened or if there's a problem with the disposal's internal mechanisms, it can create backup issues.

In Ottawa homes, especially older properties with cast iron or galvanized pipes, **pipe corrosion and mineral buildup** can create narrow spots where debris easily catches. The city's moderately hard water can contribute to mineral deposits over time, making pipes more susceptible to sudden blockages.

Start with simple solutions: Run hot water for several minutes to help dissolve grease, then try a mixture of baking soda and vinegar followed by hot water. Avoid chemical drain cleaners as they can damage pipes and are harsh on Ottawa's water treatment systems. If you have a garbage disposal, ensure it's running properly and consider grinding ice cubes to help clean the blades.

If these steps don't restore normal drainage within 24 hours, the blockage is likely deeper in your drain line and requires professional attention. **Persistent slow drainage can lead to complete backups**, potentially causing water damage to your kitchen cabinets and flooring. A licensed plumber can perform camera inspection to locate the exact blockage and use appropriate tools like drain snakes or hydro jetting to clear it safely.

For a free estimate on drain cleaning services, Ottawa Pro Plumbing can assess your specific situation and provide the most effective solution for your kitchen sink drainage issues.

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Q2

Why does my kitchen sink faucet sprayer have no pressure?

Low water pressure in your kitchen sink sprayer is typically caused by mineral buildup in the aerator or sprayer head, which restricts water flow.

The most common culprit is calcium and lime deposits that accumulate over time, especially in Ottawa where we have moderately hard water. Start by unscrewing the aerator from the end of the sprayer and soaking it in white vinegar overnight. Use an old toothbrush to scrub away any visible buildup, then rinse thoroughly before reinstalling.

If cleaning the aerator doesn't solve the problem, check the sprayer hose connection under the sink. Sometimes the hose can become kinked or partially disconnected, reducing water flow. You might also have debris caught in the sprayer head itself - try removing it and flushing it with water, or soaking it in vinegar like the aerator.

Other potential causes include a failing diverter valve inside the faucet body (which switches water between the main spout and sprayer), or sediment buildup in the supply lines. If your home has older galvanized pipes, mineral deposits throughout the plumbing system could be restricting flow to just the sprayer while leaving the main faucet unaffected.

When to call a professional: If cleaning doesn't restore pressure, or if you notice the main faucet flow is also reduced, you may need a plumber to replace internal faucet components or address broader plumbing issues. In Ottawa's older neighborhoods, we often see pressure problems related to aging supply lines that require professional attention.

For persistent low pressure issues throughout your kitchen plumbing, Ottawa Pro Plumbing can diagnose whether it's a fixture problem or something more complex in your home's water supply system.

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Q3

What is the best type of faucet for a kitchen sink?

Single-handle pull-down spray faucets are generally the best choice for most Ottawa kitchens, offering the perfect balance of functionality, durability, and convenience for daily cooking and cleaning tasks.

Pull-down spray faucets provide maximum versatility with their extendable spray head that reaches every corner of your sink and can switch between stream and spray modes. The single-handle design allows for easy one-handed operation - crucial when your other hand is holding dishes or food. Look for models with **ceramic disc cartridges** rather than compression valves, as they last longer and provide smoother operation in Ottawa's hard water conditions.

For **finish durability** in Ottawa homes, stainless steel and brushed nickel perform best against our mineral-rich water and frequent temperature changes. Chrome looks great initially but shows water spots more easily.

Commercial-style faucets with spring-loaded necks are popular but can be overkill for most home kitchens and may not fit under low cabinets.

Quality matters significantly with kitchen faucets since they're used multiple times daily. Expect to invest \$200-\$600 for a reliable faucet that will last 15-20 years. Brands like Moen, Delta, and Kohler offer good warranties and local parts availability. Avoid ultra-budget options under \$100 - they typically fail within 2-3 years and replacement costs more than buying quality initially.

Professional installation ensures proper water pressure and prevents leaks that could damage your cabinets. Most installations take 1-2 hours and include connecting supply lines, testing for leaks, and adjusting water flow. For a free estimate on kitchen faucet installation, request a quote from Ottawa Pro Plumbing to ensure your new faucet performs optimally for years to come.

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What kind of water filter should I install under my kitchen sink?

Under-sink water filters are an excellent choice for Ottawa homes, providing clean drinking water directly at your kitchen tap without taking up counter space or requiring frequent pitcher refills.

The best type depends on your specific water quality concerns. **Reverse osmosis (RO) systems** are the most comprehensive option, removing virtually all contaminants including chlorine, lead, bacteria, and dissolved minerals. These systems typically cost \$300-800 for quality units and require professional installation to connect to your plumbing and drain lines. **Carbon filtration systems** are more affordable (\$150-400) and excel at removing chlorine taste, odors, and many chemicals, though they don't address minerals or bacteria as effectively.

In Ottawa, our municipal water is generally high quality, but many residents still notice chlorine taste and want additional filtration for peace of mind. The City of Ottawa adds chlorine for disinfection, which carbon filters handle well. If you're in an older home built before 1950, you might want the extra protection of RO filtration due to potential lead service lines, though the city has been replacing these systematically.

Installation requires connecting to your cold water supply line and drain, which means cutting into existing plumbing. While some handy homeowners tackle this as DIY, improper installation can cause leaks and water damage. Most systems also need an additional faucet mounted beside your main kitchen tap. Consider having a licensed plumber handle the installation to ensure proper connections and avoid potential flooding.

Plan for ongoing maintenance - carbon filters need replacement every 6-12 months (\$50-100), while RO systems require filter changes plus annual membrane replacement (\$100-200). Factor these costs into your decision, as neglected filters can actually make water quality worse.

For a professional assessment of your home's plumbing and proper filter installation, request a quote from Ottawa Pro Plumbing to ensure your new system integrates safely with your existing kitchen plumbing.

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Can I replace my own kitchen faucet or should I hire a plumber?

Most homeowners can replace a kitchen faucet themselves if they're comfortable with basic tools and following instructions carefully. However, complications with supply lines, shut-off valves, or unexpected plumbing issues often turn this into a job that requires professional help.

Kitchen faucet replacement involves shutting off the water supply valves under the sink, disconnecting the old supply lines and drain connections, removing the old faucet, and installing the new one. The process typically takes 2-4 hours for someone with moderate DIY skills. You'll need basic tools like adjustable wrenches, pliers, and possibly a basin wrench for tight spaces under the sink.

Common complications that send homeowners calling for help include corroded shut-off valves that won't turn or start leaking when disturbed, supply lines that don't match the new faucet connections, or discovering the sink holes don't match the new faucet configuration. In Ottawa's older homes, it's not uncommon to find outdated plumbing connections that need updating to current standards.

Safety considerations include ensuring you can fully shut off the water supply and that you're comfortable working in the cramped space under the sink. If your home has older galvanized pipes or you notice any corrosion around the connections, it's wise to have a licensed plumber assess the situation first. Water damage from a failed connection can cost thousands more than hiring a professional initially.

Professional installation typically costs \$150-\$300 in Ottawa, plus the cost of the faucet. This includes ensuring proper connections, testing for leaks, and handling any unexpected issues that arise. For a free consultation about your specific kitchen faucet project, Ottawa Pro Plumbing can assess whether your installation is straightforward or if complications might arise.

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