

Protect Your Pipes...and Ours

Before you put anything down a drain in your house, think about how your pipes are interconnected with pipes all across the City, and how everything that goes down the pipes can combine to form blockages in the system.

Blockages can lead to costly repairs. Plus, if you get a blockage in pipes on your own property, you are liable for the costs to fix it. That is potentially lots of money spent to fix a preventable problem.

Clogged pipes can also lead to sewer overflows, which can cause serious health hazards, damage to your home, and can threaten the environment. Protect your pocketbook and the environment by preventing sewer blockages. Just remember...

Only Water Down the Sink

Only Toilet Paper Down the Toilet



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SEWER BACKUPS? YIKES!

*What You Need to Know
About Everyday Items that Can
Clog Your Pipes*



Pause Before You Plug the Pipe

Residents across Salem who pour fats, oils, and grease down their sink drains, and flush everyday items down their toilets, are in for a surprise. Many people think this is acceptable because it will go down the pipe and to the wastewater treatment facility. In reality, these items can clog residential pipes and cause major blockages in the wastewater system and treatment facility.

What happens to the items you dump or flush?

As the items flow down pipes, they combine with other large items causing what has been dubbed a "fatberg." A fatberg is a large mass of items that should not be put down drains or flushed down toilets, like fats, oils, grease, diapers, wipes, floss, and more.

Putting items down your sink drains or toilet can cause serious blockages in your pipes, resulting in raw sewage overflowing into your home, yard, or the house next door. This leads to an expensive and unpleasant cleanup that you may be financially responsible for. Not only does this cause costly repairs for you, but it also increases operation and maintenance costs for your local wastewater service provider, which can lead to higher sewer bills.



Think Before You Throw It in the Sink

Keep your pipes clean, avoid dumping fats, oils, and grease (FOG), such as oil, butter, lard, meat fats, sauces, dairy products, shortening, and animal fat, or food scraps down the kitchen sink drain. Oils and fats may be liquid after you use them, but as they travel down pipes they quickly cool down and harden. This leads to blockages in pipes and can cause problems for you and the City's wastewater systems.

Instead of dumping FOG and food down the sink, try these tips instead:

- Wipe up oils and grease with a paper towel and throw it in the trash.
- Pour oils and grease in a container, like a tin can, freeze it to make it easier to dispose of, and toss it in the trash.
- Oil can be kept to reuse. Strain the oil and pour it into a glass jar.
- Don't use hot water or degreasers to wash fats, oils, and grease down your pipes. These may allow FOG to go down into the lines more easily, but it will still solidify quickly once in the pipes.
- Use a drain catcher in your sink to catch large pieces of food, then dispose of them in the trash.



Toilets Are Not Trash Cans

"Flushable" Wipes

Many wipes available for purchase promise to be flushable and septic safe. The truth is that these wipes are NOT flushable. Flushable wipes are more durable than toilet paper and do not break down like toilet paper does. Instead of eventually disintegrating in the pipes they entangle with other wipes and items causing major blockages. If you use wipes, throw them in the trash instead of in the toilet, even if they say "flushable." Remember:

No Wipes in the Pipes

Other Items that Belong in the Trash, Not the Toilet

People throw all kinds of things in their toilets that can clog the pipes. If it isn't toilet paper, it doesn't belong in the toilet. The following items should not be thrown in the toilet.

Don't flush:

- Band-aids
- Cat Litter (even if it says flushable)
- Cigarettes
- Condoms
- Contact Lenses
- Diapers
- Dryer Sheets
- Feminine Pads
- Floss
- Medicine
- Q-Tips
- Tampons
- Tampon Applicators
- Toilet Bowl Scrubber Pads
- Toilet Paper Rolls
- Wipes (baby, cleansing, or facial)

