



SewerWorks

S P R I N G 2 0 1 7

FOG: *Fats, Oils, and Greases aren't just bad for your arteries and waistlines; they're bad for sewers, too!*



Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage to home interiors, and threaten the environment. Sewer pipes blocked by grease are an increasing cause of sewer overflows.* According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "grease from restaurants, homes and industrial sources are the most common cause (47 percent) of reported blockages. Grease is problematic because it solidifies, reduces conveyance capacity and blocks flow." Grease gets into the sewer from household drains and poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

Where does the grease come from?

Grease comes from meat fats, lard, oil, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, baked goods, sauces, dressings, and dairy products. When disposed down a drain, grease can build up inside of the plumbing and the sewer collection system pipes. Over time, it can block the entire line.

Problems caused by improper disposal practices:

- Sewage overflows at the origin of the clog (home), a neighbor's home, or onto a local street.
- Increased sewer collection and treatment system operation and maintenance costs.
- Higher sewer rates to customers.
- Expensive and unpleasant cleanups to be paid by persons responsible for the sewer overflow.
- Potential negative impact on water quality.
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms.



You Can Help!

Helpful hints to prevent sewer overflows and backups:

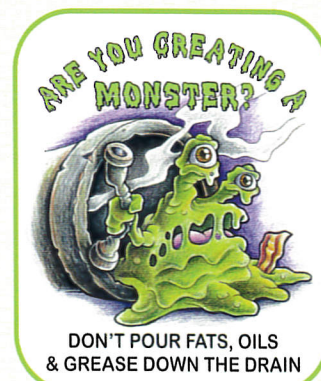
- Never pour grease down sink drains, toilets, or floor drains.
- Once it cools, pour liquid grease and fat into a container, cover to prevent spills, and dispose of it with the regular trash.
- Scrape grease and cooking scraps into a can or directly into the trash rather than washing down the drain or garbage disposal.
- Use baskets/strainers to catch unintentionally fallen food scraps or solids, and empty them into the trash.
- Speak with your friends and neighbors about how to keep grease out of sewers.

Remember, the best way to manage FOG is to keep it out of the plumbing system in the first place!

FOG Program Logo Unveiling!

Attention to all GNHWPCA customers! Be on the lookout for our new Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Program logo that we are rolling out this summer! This logo will be on our trucks, website and educational materials, to remind everyone to keep Fats, Oils, and Grease out of the drains! Pipes in your home can quickly become clogged by pouring FOG down

the drain. Sewer overflows caused by improper disposal of FOG can quickly turn into a public health hazard and be costly to fix. Avoid problems and save money by properly disposing of FOG in the trash. The best way to manage FOG is to keep it out of the plumbing system in the first place! Continue reading about FOG to learn more about easy steps you can take to help protect your home, and our environment!



* United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Report to Congress* (EPA 833-R-04-001)

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Other Things That Should NOT Be Flushed...

When you use the toilet to dispose of things that should go in the trash, you risk clogging your home's sewer pipes and our sewer lines in the street. In severe cases, clogs can cause sewer back-ups in your home or overflows in the street. It's important to remember that whatever goes down the toilet can potentially impact the water environment, so if in doubt, trash it!

Wipes

Unlike toilet paper, which breaks down quickly in water, wet wipes remain intact and tangle into massive clogs that jam pumps and block pipes. **Even those labeled "flushable" should not be flushed.**

Medications

Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove medications. Keep these compounds out of the water environment. Safely dispose of medications in the trash by following precautions recommended by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), or take medications to an approved prescription drug take-back site or event.

- **Get FDA guidance on disposing of unwanted medications, and sign up for free e-mail consumer updates from the FDA.***
- **Get information about drug take-back programs approved by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.****

Don't Flush It!

Anything made of plastic

Tampons and sanitary napkins

Disposable diapers

Cotton balls and swabs

Cleaning wipes of any kind

Facial tissue

Bandages and bandage wrappings

Old medication

Automotive fluids

Paint, solvents, sealants and thinners

Poisons and hazardous waste

Aquarium gravel or cat litter

Be Sure to Dispose of Medical Supplies Properly

Ampoules, Vials, & IV Bags

Do not empty or open the bags. Wrap the medicine container with tape to minimize breakage, then place in an opaque plastic container (such as an empty yogurt or margarine tub) to hide contents and personal information on labels. Wrap the outside of the container or bag with additional duct or shipping tape to prevent leakage, and to further obscure the contents. Dispose of the container in the trash. **DO NOT put the container in your recycling bin!**

Chemotherapy Drugs

Some chemotherapy drugs may have special disposal requirements. Ask your health care provider about proper disposal.

Mercury Thermometers

Bring to a household hazardous waste (HHW) collection or call your town's recycling contact or public works department. **DO NOT put a mercury thermometer in your trash.** Learn how to safely clean-up a broken mercury thermometer.

Sharps (needles and lancets)

Place in a puncture-proof, hard plastic container with a screw-on cap, like a bleach or detergent bottle. Seal the container with the original lid and wrap with duct tape. Place the tightly sealed container in a bag and put it in your trash. **DO NOT put the container in your recycling bin!** As an alternative, consider mail back programs or check with your local hospital or pharmacist.

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* <https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/default.htm>

** https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/