

What Not to Flush

IGNORE THE HYPE: DON'T FLUSH A WIPE!



Avoid drain pain - don't flush these things

Just because the package says "flushable" doesn't mean it's true. Many items marketed as disposable and/or flushable do not degrade like toilet paper, and they wind up clogging pipes, tangling pumps and causing messy sewer backups into streets, businesses and homes.

Our sewers are designed to dispose of very specific things. Using your toilet for disposal of many modern products will often result in blockages. The drains that connect your home to the main sewer are only big enough to carry water, toilet paper and human waste - often no wider than 4 inches.

What NOT to flush:

- Diapers (cloth, disposable, "flushable")
- Facial tissues
- Baby wipes, disinfectant wipes, moist wipes, etc.
- Toilet bowl scrub pads
- Swiffer's
- Napkins (paper or cloth), paper towels
- Dental floss
- Egg shells, nutshells, and coffee grounds
- Fats, oils, and greases
- Food items containing seeds and peelings
- Hair
- Sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms, or any non-organic material
- Vitamins, medicines or other pharmaceuticals
- Wash cloths, towels, rags (any cloth item)
- Clothing
- Sheet plastic, or plastic of any kind

So what CAN I do?

- Avoid purchasing "flushable" items. Clean with a sponge or a rag that you can reuse.
- Compost your food waste items.
- Try to limit or eliminate your garbage disposal use
- Discard hazardous materials such as used motor oil, antifreeze, etc. at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility (free of charge for Lewis County Residents.)
- If it can't be reused, recycled or composted, please place it in the garbage.

What should be flushed? Just toilet paper and human waste.

What about wet wipes? If you must use a "wet wipe" type of product rather than just toilet paper, these should be disposed of in the garbage, not down the toilet. While many "flushable wipes" packaging says that it will disintegrate like toilet paper, that generally is not accurate and these items can cause messy sewage backups into your home or neighbors' homes, local businesses or the street. If you are concerned about odors, please try a lined garbage can with a well-fitting lid, a "diaper genie" style of container, wrap your wipes in pet waste bags or reused plastic grocery bags, or perhaps look into installing an after-market bidet on your toilet.

The flush ability test: Take two bowls of water. Place toilet paper in one, and place the item in question in the other. Swish both items in the water. Wait an hour, then swish again. The toilet paper should have significantly disintegrated by then, while the other item (for example, Kleenex, wipes, napkins, etc.) will likely remain intact. Unless the item disintegrates at the rate of toilet paper, it should be placed in the garbage and not down the toilet. Otherwise, you risk a blockage in your own pipes as well as clogging a pump station and causing a sewage backup for other homes and businesses.

The City is responsible for cleaning the City's pipes and they frequently clear blockages, however, home owners are responsible for maintaining side sewers which connect from your home to the City's main lines in the streets.

Grease and your pipes don't mix

Proper disposal of your cooking oil and other greases and fats may save you from a sewage backup in your home.

These items contribute to blockages and backups:

- Butter and margarine
- Cooking oil
- Food scraps with grease, butter or oil on them
- Lard
- Meat fats, grease and juices
- Sauces with grease, butter or oil in them
- Shortening

Take these simple steps to stop clogs at home:

- Pour cooking oils and grease in a container and dispose of it in the garbage.
- Place meat and greasy food scraps in the garbage, not down the garbage disposal. It can contribute to blockages.
- Wipe pots and dishes with a used paper towel or napkin to remove grease.
- Clean your garbage disposal with this earth-friendly recipe.
- Most importantly: grease goes in the garbage, not in your sink.