

Don't Rush; Think Before You Flush

Society is using more convenient, disposable products than ever before. These products were never meant to be flushed down the toilet and are costing the Lethbridge wastewater treatment plant thousands of dollars a year to fix.

Think before you flush and avoid spending thousands of dollars on costly repairs. Our sewer system is dealing with more and more clogs caused by items that were never meant to be flushed down the toilet. There are many items that claim to be flushable but in reality are causing sewer blockages, clogs and backups. The following list details 'unflushables'.

1. Fats, oil, and grease

This is a tough one, and everyone has done it at one point, but cooking fats should NEVER go in the drain or garbage disposal. It seems like a liquid when it's hot, but as soon as this grease hits the drain, it cools and congeals, becoming pipe-clogging wax. *Solution- Allow it to harden, then scrape it into the trash.*

2. Rags, bathroom wipes and paper towels

These "moist towelettes" nicknamed "adult baby wipes" are becoming an increasingly popular bathroom accessory. Despite the fact that they're marketed to be flushed like toilet paper, these wipes are creating clogs and backups in sewer systems around the world. *Solution-Toss wipes, rags and paper towels in the trash.*

3. Feminine Hygiene Products

Many types of feminine hygiene products (tampons, sanitary napkins) expand and have water absorbing chemicals embedded in the product. They expand and clog the pipes resulting in costly repairs for home owners and the wastewater treatment plant. *Solution-Wrap used feminine hygiene products with toilet paper and toss them in the trash.*

4. Hair

Never flush hair down the toilet or down the drain. It does not break apart into loose pieces; instead it stays clumped together and forms large masses. *Solution- Hair from your brush should always be tossed in the trash.*

5. Prescription Medication

Many people feel they are doing the safe thing by flushing prescription medication, but it's actually very dangerous. These drugs destroy bacteria, contaminate groundwater supplies, and can have terrible effects on wildlife downstream. *Solution - Take unused prescription medication back to your pharmacist for proper disposal.*

6. Condoms

They probably seem small and insignificant, but these latex prophylactics cause serious problems for septic tanks and sewage treatment plants. Condoms can inflate like balloons and cause destructive obstructions. *Solution - Toss in trash.*

7. Cotton Balls & Swabs

They're just cotton, right? It might seem like these tiny bathroom tools would just get soggy and eventually break down in the watery pipeline, but they don't. They eventually gather together in bends of the pipe, causing massive blockages that are difficult to dislodge. *Solution - Toss them in the trash.*

8. Paper towels

If you do use paper towels, know that they are NOT designed to break down in water like toilet paper. Flushing them can cause BIG problems. *Solution - Use reusable rags or toss the paper towel in the trash.*

9. Band-aids

These are made from non-biodegradable plastic, which is terrible for the environment and can cause clogs in the sewage system. *Solution - Toss it in the trash.*

10. Dental floss

Dental floss is not biodegradable. Once flushed, it loves to wrap itself around other objects in the pipeline, making tiny clogs bigger. *Solution - Toss it in the trash.*

11. Razors - Syringes -Needles

None of these are biodegradable or safe to flush. They are dangerous to have in septic or sewer systems and pose a real danger to wastewater treatment plant workers. *Solution- Use Sharps Containers.*