

YOU can prevent pollution!

Everything that we put down our drains except water is pollution. Keeping wastewater costs down and our environment clean can be as simple as knowing and using the correct places for waste.

What can you flush?

For health and sanitation reasons we flush the three P's: pee, poop, and (toilet) paper.



Reduce Water

One way to keep costs down is to reduce the water that you use and treat.



Conserve water

- * use high efficiency appliances
- * run appliances with full loads
- * stagger use of appliances throughout the day
- * use low-flow, high-efficiency water fixtures
- * reduce use of water during spring

thaw or consecutive rainy days

Reduce inflow and infiltration

- * avoid planting trees and shrubs over or near pipes
- * fix leaky fixtures and running toilets promptly
- * do not put groundwater or stormwater into sewer pipes or onto drainfields

Wastewater Treatment Involves Living Machines

In the country or the city, all wastewater treatment depends on microorganisms to eat and break down pollutants. What we flush can upset these microorganisms or even kill them.



Greener Cleaning

Excessive use of sanitizers and disinfectants like bleach and ammonia, or disposal of harsh chemicals like solvents, can kill the 'good' microorganisms and disrupt residential and municipal wastewater systems.

To minimize impacts:

- * Prevent dirt. Use walk-off mats, keeping entryways clean, and remove shoes indoors
- * Clean only to the level required. Much household cleaning does not require disinfection or sanitization
- * Clean first before disinfection or sanitization
- * Purchase environmentally-preferable products certified by [EPA Safer Choice](#) or [Green Seal](#)
- * Follow product labels - amount and concentration
- * Make your own green cleaners using baking soda, vinegar, and liquid soap
- * Use plungers, plumber's snakes, and hot water to unclog drains.



Don't flush this!

Even though some products such as wipes and baby diapers claim to be "flushable," they are not.

Please keep these things out of our toilets and drains:
Cloggers, binders, and floaters

- disposable diapers (child and adult)
- cleaning wipes of any kind
- tampons and tampon applicators
- sanitary napkins and panty liners
- napkins, tissues, & paper towels
- plastics, condoms, gloves
- cotton balls, swabs, Q-Tips
- facial tissue or paper towels
- bandages or bandage wrappings
- pet poop or cat litter
- hair & toilet bowl scrub pads
- textiles—towels, rags, clothes
- needles and sharps
- fruit stickers, peels, and seeds
- shells: nuts, eggs, or other
- dental floss or cigarette butts
- **fats, oils, and grease**



Toxics

- automotive fluids
- paint, solvents, sealants and thinners
- poisons and hazardous waste
- lye, acids, bleach
- sanitizers & disinfectants, cleaners
- salts (water softeners)

Nutrient elements & high calorie waste

- fertilizers (contain nitrogen and phosphorus)
- phosphorus based cleaners
- ammonia (nitrogen based)
- food waste, coffee grounds
- large amounts of milk, blood, coffee
- beer, wine, liquor

Drugs

- medicine, vitamins, pills



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9QZOUwE58Q>

If we can't flush these things, what should we do with them?

Grease: Food Establishments can give large amounts of grease and oils to rendering or biodiesel haulers. Most food scrap haulers and transfer stations accept grease with food scraps for composting. Residents can dispose of grease in their trash.

Food waste: Dispose of food waste and other organic materials by composting or working with a food scrap hauler. dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/organic-materials

Hazardous waste disposal: Attend your solid waste region's household hazardous waste collection event.

dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/HHW

Solid waste disposal: Contact your solid waste management district. dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts

Needles & Sharps disposal: healthvermont.gov/response/safe-needle-disposal-vermont

Drug disposal: healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drugs/services/prescription-drug-disposal

Save Money

Use of these recommendations will save you and our communities time, money, and problems.



Septic Care

For those of us that have or use onsite septic systems, here are some additional maintenance actions:

1. Have the septic tank effluent filter cleaned every 6-12 months. This filter keeps solids and hair from spoiling the soils in the drainfield that absorb and further treat wastewater. If you do not have an effluent filter, consider putting one on your system.
2. Have the septic tank pumped every 3-5 years. If you have a garbage disposal more frequent pumping may be necessary. Systems using innovative and alternatives technologies are not allowed to have garbage disposals.
3. If you also have a pump station too, remember that it needs to be pumped out and cleaned too.

More information on septic system care:

dec.vermont.gov/water/programs/ww-systems/program-education

Look for the septic smart week events & news every fall!

