

# What not to flush: understand what not to flush or pour down your drains

Many items we use on a daily basis Should Not go down our toilets or drains.

By flushing or pouring some of these materials down any of the drains in your home, you can cause:

- Damage or blockages of your home plumbing, which could lead to basement flooding
- Damage to the Town's sewer pipes located under the streets, which could lead to basement flooding
- Damage to wastewater treatment plants
- Harm to the environment and aquatic habitat in the Lake, local streams and rivers

To help keep the entire sewage system working well, please do not flush or put any of the following products down the drain:

- Hygiene Products
  - Wipes/baby wipes – even those that say flushable can cause a problem
  - Tampons, sanitary pads
  - Condoms
  - Cotton swabs
  - Dental floss
  - Facial tissue
  - Paper towels
- Hygiene products:
  - Products, such as wipes (even some that may be labeled flushable) and rags should not be flushed down the toilet. These products can create blockages in your home plumbing and in the Town's sewer pipes, which can cause damage and can be costly to repair. The wipes that do make their way through the sewer pipes can damage equipment at wastewater treatment plants. Whether it is the cost of cleaning and repairing a flooded basement, cleaning and repairing the Town's sewer pipes or fixing equipment at a wastewater treatment plant – all of this leads to increased operation and maintenance costs for you and the Municipality.
- Here is a quick list of some of the top hygiene products not to flush:

Product	Where it should go
Wipes/baby wipes – even those that say flushable can cause a problem	Garbage
Tampons, sanitary pads	Garbage/Compost
Condoms	Garbage
Cotton swabs	Garbage
Dental floss	Garbage
Facial tissue	Garbage/Compost
Paper towels (not contaminated with chemicals)	Garbage/Compost

## Pharmaceuticals

As a result of better measurement instruments and techniques, traces of pharmaceuticals are being detected in the environment. One way they get there is by consumers disposing of medications (prescription and non-prescription such as pain relievers, cough syrups, antibiotics, veterinary drugs, etc.) in the garbage, flushing them down the toilet or pouring them down the sink.

Unused pharmaceutical products should be returned to the pharmacy or disposed of via household hazardous waste.

# Fat, Oil and Grease, Information for Residents

## How do fat, oil and grease cause sewer blockages?

When warm fats, oils, and grease are washed down the sink or toilet into the plumbing system they cool, harden and stick to the inside of sewer pipes (both in private sewer lines in your home and Town sewers under the streets). Over time, the grease will build up and can block the entire pipe.

## Where do fat, oil, and grease come from?

They often are a result of cooking, and can be found in meats, fats, lards, cooking oil, shortening, butter and margarine, food scraps, baking goods, sauces, salad dressings and dairy products.

What is the result of fat, oil, and grease build-up in the sanitary sewer systems?

You may think that once it's gone down the drain, it simply washes away and is gone for good. But that's not the case. Fat, oil and grease can build up in your pipes, causing blocked sewers which can lead to problems, such as:

- Overflowing of raw sewage into your home, business, or neighbouring property, causing basement flooding – an expensive and unpleasant clean-up.
- Contact with disease-causing organisms.
- A raw sewage overflow into parks, yards, streets, creeks, rivers and the lake.
- An increase in operation and maintenance costs to clean and repair damaged sewer pipes.

## What can you do to help prevent sewer system blockages?

- NEVER pour grease down sink drains or into toilets.
- DO put basket/strainers into sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids. Empty the drain basket/strainer into the compost for disposal.

## What should you do with your fat, oil and grease?

- Let the grease cool and harden, then scrape it and food scraps from trays, plates, pots and pans, utensils, grills, and cooking surfaces into your compost, recycling or garbage.
- Small volumes of liquid cooking oil can be placed into the compost, recycling or garbage as long as the oil can be absorbed by the other organic materials or paper towels.
- Larger amounts should be collected into a sealed container labelled “cooking oil” and can be dropped off at Hazardous Household Waste (HHW) depots located at the Wellington County operated transfer stations and community environment days.