

# Keeping the sewer lines clean and problem free

## *In the kitchen...*

### Fats, Oils & Grease

Fats, oils and grease, known collectively as FOG, represent the most serious enemy of our sewer lines.

- Butter
- Cooking oil
- Salad dressing
- Mayonnaise
- Grease
- Gravy
- Sauces
- Food/meat scraps
- Lard
- Margarine
- Shortening

When FOG is dumped down the drain, it forms large, thick grease balls that clog pipes. Clogged pipes can result in sewer backups and spills, create environmental problems, or even flood homes and businesses. Commercial food-handling facilities contribute greatly to FOG buildup in sewer lines because of the amount of grease used in cooking and other food prep work. Preventing sewer backups from FOG blockages also saves money.

**Important!** When sewer pipes back up on private property, the homeowner or business owner is responsible for the cleanup.

**Can it. Cool it. Throw it away.**

### Do's

- Can the grease! Keep an empty metal can and pour oil and grease into the can. Allow grease to cool in the container before throwing it in the trash.
- Wipe before washing. For greasy pans, pour the grease into a container and use a paper towel to wipe out the remaining grease in the pan prior to washing.
- Seal the oil. **Liquid should be limited to no more than one-half gallon.** Mix liquid vegetable oil with an absorbent material such as kitty litter or coffee grounds in a sealable container before throwing it in the trash.
- Keep drains clean by pouring 1/2 cup of baking soda down the drain followed by 1/2 cup of white vinegar. Wait 10-15 minutes and then rinse with hot water.

### Don'ts

- Don't pour fat, oil or grease down drains or garbage disposals.

Don't use hot water to rinse grease off cookware, utensils, dishes or surfaces.



A pipe clogged with thick fats, oil and grease, also known as FOG.

## *In the bathroom...*

### **The Toilet is Not a Trash Can**

A toilet is designed to remove only human waste and bathroom tissue with each flush.

Sending other items down the drain threatens home plumbing, the County's sanitary sewer system and ultimately the lift station where wastewater is treated before being safely released to the ecosystem.

Tip: Keep a small trash can in the bathroom near the toilet and use it to discard all those things that only seem harmless to flush.

#### **Among the most common offenders:**

- “flushable” wipes – don’t break down easily despite manufacturer claims
- facial tissue/paper towel – don’t break down nearly as fast as toilet paper
- cotton swabs – don’t break down
- dental floss – doesn’t break down and wraps around equipment
- tampons and sanitary pads – don’t break down easily
- condoms – don’t break down easily
- medications – can contaminate drinking water
- Mop heads and cleaning cloths – frequently causing havoc at the treatment plants
- cat litter – does not dissolve in water
- cigarette butts – don’t break down easily
- contact lenses – don’t break down and contribute to microplastic pollution

