

Preventing Sewer Backups

Sewers are designed to dispose of very specific things. Using your toilet for disposal of many modern products, such as wipes, 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. The pipes are often only four inches wide.

- ▶▶ **Biodegradable does not mean Flushable!**
- ▶▶ **Just because it says “it’s flushable” doesn’t mean it is!**

What **not** to flush down your toilet:

- Baby wipes, disinfectant wipes, etc.(or "flushable")
- Diapers, incontinence items, etc. (cloth, disposable or “flushable”)
- Facial tissues
- Napkins (paper or cloth) or paper towels
- Sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms or any non-organic material
- Toilet bowl scrub pads or “Swiffer” type pads
- Wash cloths, towels, rags, clothing or any cloth items
- Dental floss
- Sheet plastic or plastic of any kind
- Egg shells, nutshells, coffee grounds or any food items
- Fats, oils or greases



The most common causes of sewer back-ups are grease, disposable wipes and roots in the sewer line. (See *pipe with grease photo right.*)

To help prevent future sewer back-ups:

- Stop using the kitchen sink and garbage disposal for grease and food scraps. Vegetable and meat scraps, salad dressing, rice, butter, cooking oils, and many other foods quickly deposit grease and solids that can build up in pipes over time and eventually block a sewer line.
- Instead of putting food waste into a garbage disposal, use a paper towel or spatula to move food waste from plates and pans into yard waste container. Let melted oils used for cooking solidify in a container on the counter or in the refrigerator before placing them into the garbage.
- Know where your sewer line is located. Call the Public Works Department at 817-616-3830 if you are not sure. Although the City does not perform locates on private property, we will provide whatever information is available. Do not plant trees and shrubs near the sewer line. Roots often creep into the sewer pipe and over time cause a blockage. If trees or shrubs have caused a problem in the past, remove them.
- Don’t waste money on "miracle" root killers, which rarely work. Roots typically enter the top part of the pipe. Chemicals sit on the bottom.