

Did you know?

Many of the “disposable” items sold today wreak havoc on our public sewer system. “Disposable” and “Flushable” do not mean the same thing and even though many of the items state they are flushable they don’t degrade like toilet paper and cause problems in the sanitary sewer system.

Here is a list of some things you should NOT flush:

- Fats, oils or grease from cooking
- Coffee grinds
- Egg shells
- Produce stickers
- Chunks of garbage
- Disposable diapers and wipes
- Feminine hygiene products
- Paper towels and napkins
- Flushable cat litter
- Rags
- Condoms
- Bags/wrappings and cardboard
- Motor oil, transmission fluids, anti-freeze or other toxic chemicals
- Solvents, paints, turpentine, nail polish, polish remover
- Flammable or explosive substances
- Corrosive substances that are either acidic or caustic
- Needles and sharps
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications
- The “former pet” goldfish, hamster or gerbil
- Cotton balls and swabs
- Lysol/Clorox wipes
- Band-Aids
- Chewing gum
- Cigarette butts
- Dental floss
- Dryer sheets
- Hair
- Cosmetics

Why are these items a problem?

Wastewater treatment plants use biological methods to clean the wastewater; chemicals can harm or kill the “bugs” and the plant will stop working which will result in untreated water being discharged into the surface water. As well, any solid matter you put down the toilet or sink has the potential to cause blockages in the public sewer or your own private drain. This can lead to:

- Raw sewage overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home;
- An expensive and unpleasant cleanup;
- Costly lift station pump repairs or replacements;
- Raw sewage overflowing into yards, and streets;
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms;
- An increase in operation and maintenance costs for Portage County Water Resources, which results in sewer bill increases; and
- Increased pollution due to sewage spills caused by the blockages.

Please remember the private lateral (the part of the system between your home and the public sewer) is the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain. So...

When in doubt, don’t flush, throw it out!

What can YOU do?

There are multiple things homeowners can do to keep the sewer running downhill, reduce operations and maintenance costs and protect our streams

- ✍ Collect “cooled” cooking grease in a sealable container and dispose of it in the garbage. Wipe out any grease remaining in the pan with a paper towel and dispose of before washing.
- ✍ DON’T USE a garbage disposal. Food scraps are upwards of 20% of household waste and increase the consumption of oxygen at the plant – simply put, this costs more to treat because we need to add more oxygen (electricity). It’s better if you compost your coffee grounds, food waste and egg shells if you can and save a little money in fertilizer in your gardens. Coffee grounds placed at the base of your plant can prevent slugs. If you don’t have the means to compost then throw it in the garbage.
- ✍ Make sure your home’s downspouts and footer sump AREN’T discharging to the sanitary sewer. Rain water and groundwater are “clean” waters that can be discharged to the ground surface. Consider collecting in a rain barrel during the summer.
- ✍ Take expired/unused prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs to the following locations in Portage County for proper disposal:
 - ✓ Aurora Police Department
 - ✓ Brimfield Police Department
 - ✓ Hiram Police Department
 - ✓ Kent Police Department
 - ✓ Kent State University (530 Summit Rd)
 - ✓ Portage County Sheriff’s Department
 - ✓ Ravenna Police Department
 - ✓ Streetsboro Police Department

Remember to contact us when...

As a “user” of the Portage County Water Resources Department sanitary sewer you need to contact our office any time your sanitary sewer line is altered – even if you hit it when you go to plant a tree. Speaking of which, you probably shouldn’t do that - tree roots tend to find their way into the sewer pipe and create a blockage, so why not just contact us if you wonder where your sanitary sewer line is too. 330.298.2066.

And if you didn’t know...

The Portage County Water Resources Department processes sludge through a dryer and then sells this product at a very low rate of \$2.50/ton. Just bring a truck to our Streetsboro Wastewater Treatment Plant located at 9501 Jefferson Street (off of SR 303). You can spread it as you would any other dry fertilizer – it may not be as strong as Scotts, but it’s much better for the environment. If you would like additional information please contact us.