

# ***“Avoid Drain Pain”***

**Sewer systems are designed to dispose of very specific things.**

**Just because the package says flushable doesn't mean it's true.**

When you use your toilet, shower, washing machine or dishwasher, wastewater leaves your home through pipes that connect to the Town's sewer system. Unfortunately, over the years, people have turned the toilet into a trash can. From medications and sanitary products to deceased pet fish and cigarette butts, if it fits, people flush it.

Flushing these types of items down the toilet causes home pipes to clog and can have a huge impact on our municipal system. Every property owner can be a potential contributor to sewer problems and a potential victim of those problems.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?** Basically, the only things you should ever flush down a toilet are human waste and toilet paper. Even though some products claim to be flushable, they aren't.

**WHAT IS THE FLUSHABILITY TEST?** Take two bowls of water. Place toilet paper in one and place the item in question in the other. Swish both items in the water, wait an hour, then swish again. The toilet paper should have significantly disintegrated, while the other item will likely remain intact. Unless the item disintegrates at the rate of toilet paper, it should be placed in the trash. Otherwise, you risk a blockage in your home as well as clogging a pump station or causing a sewage backup for other homes and businesses.

### **3 EASY STEPS TO KEEP OUR SEWER SYSTEM HEALTHY:**

1. Do not flush non-degradable items.
2. Seal non-flushable items in a bag and dispose in the trash.
3. Keep wastewater as chemical free as possible.

**WHAT HAPPENS TO IT?** All sewers lead to pump stations that transfer liquid waste (sludge) to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The sludge is treated using a combination of filtration, aeration & disinfection processes before the water is released back into the harbor. It is critical to keep household and hazardous chemicals out of the system as these can kill the “good bacteria” that are essential to the treatment process. For more information, visit [www.fridayharbor.org](http://www.fridayharbor.org).

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE A BLOCKAGE?** The Town is responsible for cleaning and repairing the main lines in the streets. Property Owners are responsible for maintaining side sewers connecting to those main lines.

### **“Think Trash, Not Toilets!”**

Thank you for caring about your neighbors and our environment. - *The Town of Friday Harbor*



### ***Thank you for Not Flushing These Items:***

- Sanitary Products
- Baby Wipes
- Diapers
- Condoms
- Hair
- Bandages
- Facial tissue
- Paper towels
- Cleaning wipes
- Sponges
- Cotton balls
- Dental floss
- Prescription drugs
- OTC medications
- Dirt
- Kitty litter
- Pet waste
- Deceased animals
- Food
- Fats, oil & grease
- Coffee grounds
- Automotive fluids
- Paints, solvents, sealants & thinners
- Poisons, pesticides & hazardous waste
- Cigarette butts
- Cloth of any kind
- Plastic of any kind
- Non-biodegradable items of any kind

# **“Stop and think. Not down the sink!”**

**What you pour down your sink could cause major damage not just to your home but to your entire neighborhood.**

Clogged pipes cause RAW SEWAGE BACKUPS. While unquestionably nasty and distressing, these can also be very EXPENSIVE for you as the home owner. If the problem happens farther down the line, it can affect your neighbors and eventually the entire town system. Damage to the overall system can result in increased sewer rates due to maintenance and repair. It can also put everyone's health at risk as well as that of our island environment and harbor.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?** The majority of backups are caused by *FOG* (Fat, Oil and Grease) that builds up in pipes, trapping debris and creating clogs that nothing can get through. This is easily preventable if we stop and think before allowing FOG down the sink.

FOG includes animal fats, cooking oil, lard, butter, shortening, batters, dairy products, salad dressings, sauces and gravy.

### **3 EASY STEPS TO FOG-FREE PIPES:**

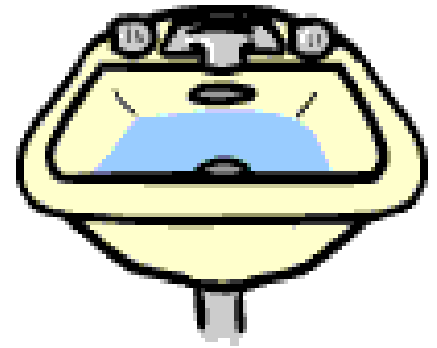
1. Scrape food into garbage; wipe dishes and pans with paper towels.
2. Pour used FOG into a suitable container and dispose in garbage.
3. Use a sink strainer to catch food and fats for disposal in garbage.

**CAN YOU OUTSMART IT?** Hot water does not dissolve it. Bleach, detergents and drain additives might briefly break up FOG, but it quickly reforms and coats your pipes. Same goes for FOG chopped up in a garbage disposal. The science of FOG can't be outsmarted.

**WHAT ABOUT STORM DRAINS?** They can get clogged, too. But more likely the FOG will end up choking our harbor. And motor oil? That's a serious hazardous waste. Don't put it in your garbage, the ground, or the storm water system. Take it to an approved disposal site.

**“Please stop and think about what you put down the sink!”**

Thank you for caring about your neighbors and our environment. - *The Town of Friday Harbor*



## **Refuse and Recycling Reminders:**

- Refuse and recycling cans must be out **by 9:00 a.m.** on your scheduled pick-up day.
- The side of the can must be labeled with your house number or it will not be collected by our refuse department.
- If you would like to sign up for single-family residential recycling service, please email: **[billing@fridayharbor.org](mailto:billing@fridayharbor.org)**.