

CORONAVIRUS IMPACT ON THE SEWER SYSTEM

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the daily lives of our entire nation and Fenton Township wants to take this opportunity to encourage all citizens to follow CDC guidelines to prevent or slow the spread of the virus, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap & water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom.
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap & water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Practice social distancing - stay six feet away from others.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, (tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets & sinks).

With families spending more time at home to stay safe and avoid spreading the virus, this can lead to an increased risk of sewer overflows and backups if certain types of waste are not disposed of properly.

WHAT CAN BE FLUSHED?

The COVID-19 virus has created a greater focus on cleaning and sanitizing in the home. It is vitally important that residents avoid flushing products other than toilet paper down a toilet during COVID-19 cleaning, or any other cleaning activity.

Products like **sanitizing wipes, baby wipes, diapers, feminine hygiene products, tissues or paper towels** should **NEVER BE FLUSHED**. These items do not break down and can clog toilets, potentially damaging fixtures and leading to costly plumbing repairs. On a larger scale, these products can cause even bigger problems for our community's sanitary sewer system, where severe blockages can cause sewer main breaks, overflows and the backup of sewage into homes.

No Wipes Down the Pipes

Even if a product says it is "flushable" ...

Unless it is toilet paper, it should not be flushed!

- Diapers (including cloth, cotton, disposable, or plastic)
- Flushable, disposable, cleaning, or baby wipes
- Paper towels, cloth towels, or any type of rag
- Feminine hygiene products
- Facial Tissues

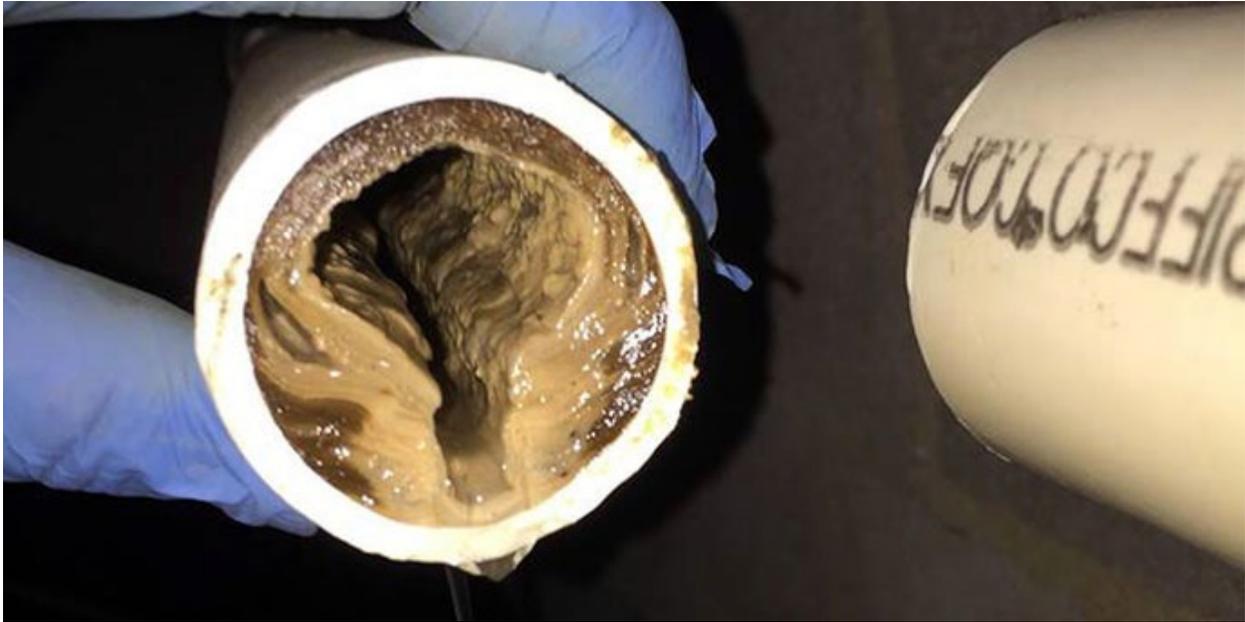


Even wipes marketed as "flushable" are not toilet-friendly, and should **never** be flushed. Dispose of all non-toilet paper products properly by throwing them in the garbage.

COOKING GREASE AND OIL

For many families, more time at home also means more home-cooked meals. An increase in home cooking also creates a need to dispose of more cooking grease and oil.

After you have finished cooking some bacon or sautéing some vegetables, **never** dump the excess grease and oil down the drain or into a toilet. Dump it in a cup, wait for it to cool, and throw it in the trash, because even a small amount of oil dumped down the drain can build up over time and wreak havoc on not only your drainage system, but also the community's whole sewer system.



Here is what happens when you put oil or grease down the drain: it makes its way through your pipes and gets into the sewer system, where it joins up with the area's wastewater. This wastewater can contain a wide assortment of chemicals as well as other people's grease, and when fatty acids mix with calcium, (which is common in sewer water), the two bond into a soapy, waxy compound. These little fatty blobs stick to each other as well as the walls and ceiling of the sewer lines, creating something called a "fatberg". These fatbergs continue to grow and grow over time, eventually causing blockages in the sewer lines, which could cause water from the sewer to flow back up through your drains and into your home.

This giant, greasy mess can clearly cause a lot of damage to the sewer system, but it can also clog up your pipes as well. If you have ever left bacon grease in the pan for too long you will notice that it completely solidifies as it cools and can be very difficult to clean off. Now picture this happening inside the pipes in your house, every time you rinse out your pan. Again, dump the excess grease or oil into a cup, let it cool and throw it in the trash. Wipe any residual grease from pots and pans with a paper towel and throw it in the trash. Even small amounts of grease that go down the drain can build up over time and cause blockages.

Please direct any questions regarding these issues to the Fenton Township office at 810-629-1537.