

What NOT to Flush Down the Toilet

To help you save embarrassment, thousands of dollars in expensive plumbing repairs, and avoid polluting the environment, pay attention to this list of things that you must never, EVER, flush down the toilet:

1. Feminine Products

Tampons and other feminine hygiene products are not supposed to be flushed down the toilet.

2. Cooking Grease/Food

Grease should never be poured down any drain, period. It may look like a liquid that can easily be dumped down a drain, but when it cools, it will congeal and clog up your pipes. Collect your grease in a glass jar and throw it in the trash, or save the grease and reuse it, especially bacon grease...mmmm.

3. Baby Wipes/Wet Wipes/Cleaning Pads

These “adult baby wipes” are becoming increasingly popular nowadays. They are also increasingly causing clogs and backups in sewage pipes across the country. Although some of these brands might say they are flushable on the box, there are groups that are revising the guidelines, so soon all wet wipes will have a noticeable DO NOT FLUSH symbol on the packaging. If you must use these, throw them away in the trash can. Keep one close to the toilet. Flushing wet wipes can easily turn into an expensive mistake when you have to call a plumber to snake your toilet.

4. Dental Floss Floss is not biodegradable and can cause serious clogs and environmental damage.

5. Q-tips/Cotton Balls

You might think that cotton will break down, since some toilet paper is made from cotton linen, but they don't! They will clump together, causing stoppages at bends in the pipes.

6. Diapers

Just because there is human waste inside does not mean that they are OK to flush. Diapers are made to expand in water. In the unlikely case you actually get the diaper to flush, it will likely get caught in the U-bend of the pipe.

7. Pills

You may think it is a good idea to put pills out of harm's way, but you are probably doing more harm than good by flushing them. They have toxic effects on groundwater supplies and wildlife. There are many community-based “take back you meds programs.

8. Paper Towels/Tissues

If you really want to save money and help the environment, you will use washable cloths and rags, but if you have to use paper towels, throw them in the trash, not the toilet. Tissues and paper towels are not made to dissolve like toilet paper; throw them in the trash.

9. Cigarette Butts

What a waste of water! Each flush uses up to three gallons. They look gross floating in the water and they are full of toxic chemicals that end up going straight into the groundwater supply. If you have to smoke, throw the butts away properly.

What does that leave? Not much! Human excrement and regular toilet paper are the only things you should flush down your toilet.