

# It's a Toilet, Not a Trashcan!



## Some Things Just Don't Belong in the Toilet .....

Toilets are only meant for one activity, and you know what we're talking about! When the wrong thing is flushed, results can include costly backups on your own property or problems at your local wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). That's why it's so important to treat toilets properly and flush only your personal contributions to the local WWTP.

### Don't rush to flush any items like:

- Baby wipes and diapers
- Rags and towels
- Cotton swabs
- Syringes
- Candy and other foods wrappers
- Clothing labels
- Cleaning sponges
- Toys
- Plastic items of any description
- Aquarium gravel or kitty litter
- Rubber items such as latex gloves
- Condoms
- Cigarette butts
- Sanitary napkins or tampons
- Hair
- Underwear
- Disposable toilet brushes/wipes

### Sewer Overflows are a Mess – Disposable does not mean Flushable!

It will take a lot more than the paper towels that caused this mess to clean it up. Flushing paper towels and other garbage down the toilet wastes water and can create sewer backups and overflows. This can also cause time-consuming backups in the public sewer pipes and at the local WWTP, and related costs can be passed on to the sewer users. Even if the label reads "flushable," you are still safer and more environmentally correct to place the item in a trashcan. And because homeowners are responsible for their property's sewer pipes, improper flushing can cost you money. **You plug it, you pay for it!**



### And There's More ....

Whatever ends up in your toilet can potentially impact the water environment, so it's really important to keep household wastes such as window cleaners, unused or expired pharmaceutical products, paint thinners, fats, and fruit labels out of toilets and drains and dispose of them properly. For more information visit [solidwaste@co.livingston.mi.us/SolidWaste](mailto:solidwaste@co.livingston.mi.us/SolidWaste) or online at: <http://co.livingston.mi.us/SolidWaste>

## Helping to Prevent Sewer Overflows and Backups is Easy.

### Where does the grease come from?

Grease is the byproduct of cooking that comes from meat fats, lard, oil, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, baked goods, sauces and dairy products. When washed down the sink, grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes (both on your property and in the street). Over time, it can build up and block an entire pipe.

**Caution:** Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. Moreover, hot water and products such as detergents that claim to dissolve grease only pass it down the line and cause problems elsewhere.

### The results can be:

- Raw sewage overflowing in your home or onto your lawn.
- An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid for by you the home or business owner.
- Raw sewage overflowing in yards and streets.
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms.
- An increase in operation and maintenance costs for local sewer departments, which can lead to higher sewer bills for customers.

### YOU CAN HELP!

#### Help prevent sewer overflows by:

- Never pouring grease down sink drains to into toilets.
- Scraping grease and food scraps into a can or the trash for disposal (or recycling where available).
- Putting baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and emptying them into the trash.
- Speaking with your friends and neighbors about how to keep out of the sewers.

### Fats, oils and greases aren't just bad for arteries and waistlines; they're bad for sewers too.

Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home interiors and threaten the environment. A common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

