JOIN THE WAVE

Scottish Water

NATURE CALLS

Find out what causes blocked drains, sewer flooding in homes and harms the environment. Plus the steps you can take to stop it.



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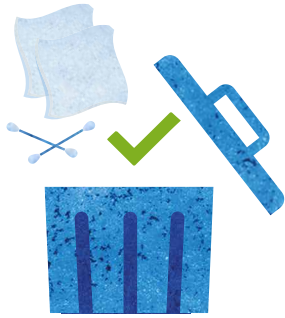
How you can help prevent blockages

We can all see that Scotland's climate is changing. With severe weather, storm water can overwhelm sewers which are blocked with wipes and other items that shouldn't be flushed.

Every year there are over 36,000 blocked drains and sewers across Scotland, which can cause flooding which affects you and your neighbours and pollutes rivers, burns, coastal waters and beaches in your local area. That's why we spend millions every year tackling the problems caused by waste. Around 80% of these blockages are caused by items that weren't meant to be flushed down the loo or poured down sinks and drains.

The waste water drain which runs from your home to the public sewer is usually about 10cm wide, which is less than the diameter of a DVD. This drain is designed to only take the used water from sinks, showers and baths and pee, poo and toilet paper from the toilet. Even though other things may seem to flush or pour away, they could be causing your drains to block.

But you can help a lot by doing a little. Please dispose of wipes in the bin, not down the loo, and don't slop fats, oil or grease down the sink.



In the bathroom

Here's an easy to remember rule of thumb: only flush the **3Ps**: **p**ee, **p**oo and toilet **p**aper. Everything else should go in the bin, not down your toilet.

Help play your part in protecting our environment. Keep a bin in the bathroom for you to quickly, safely and hygienically dispose of all the 'do not flush' personal items. Most of these items contain plastic.

Your bathroom checklist of 'do not flush' items:

- any wipes (baby, facial, personal cleansing, surface cleaning) - even if the pack says 'flushable';
- period products (sanitary towels, tampons, tampon applicators, panty liners, backing strips and wrappings);
- cotton wool, cotton buds, disposable nappies and nappy liners;
- condoms, incontinence pads, colostomy bags, used bandages and contact lenses.

Special disposable bags are available at most pharmacies and supermarkets.

You should also safely dispose of:

- razor blades in a solid container before putting them in the bin,
- syringes and needles in a sharps box or take them to your nearest Needle Bank, and
- unused or unwanted medicines – return these to a pharmacy for safe disposal instead of putting them down your toilet or in your bin.

Even when you are out and about, make sure you use the bins provided in public toilets.



In the kitchen

It may seem like fats, oil and grease (FOG) go down the kitchen drain with ease. However, once in sewers and pipes they cool and congeal. Then when these fats combine with other materials in the sewer system, they create blockages and nasty fatbergs.

Pouring hot water down your plughole will not help to dissolve any fats, oil or grease, and remember everything that you put down your plughole, toilet and drains all ends up in the drains and sewers.

All fats are equal. Whether it is saturated fat (like lard), mono-unsaturated fat (like olive oil) or vegetable oil – they all congeal and harden.

Your kitchen checklist:

- Fats, oil and grease – if you can't reuse it, leave to cool and then scrape into a sealable container and recycle or put it in the bin*.
- Give plates, pans, utensils and containers a quick scrape or wipe with some kitchen towel before washing and use a sink strainer in the plughole to catch any bits of leftover food going down the sink.
- Believe it or not soup, stocks, sauces and milk products all contain fat, which can also congeal and harden in your drains – leave these to cool/harden, scrape into a container and put them in the bin*.
- Peelings – put any waste food and peelings into your household rubbish*.

* Please check with your local Council, oil recycling site or waste contractor for information on how to recycle or dispose of used fats, oil and grease in your area.

Do not flush down the toilet:



Never pour down the sink:



When nature calls, there's a world to save.

Please bin the wipes and join the wave.

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