

NEW STRAINS ON OUR WASTEWATER SYSTEM

Clogged Pipes & Increased Disinfectant Use



To combat COVID-19, people are using more and more disinfecting products to keep themselves healthy and safe. However, proper disposal of cleaning items is crucial to maintaining our vital infrastructure.

There are two main dangers with the increased use of disinfectant products: damage to wastewater pipes by clogging and damage to the wastewater treatment process via chemicals.

CLOGGED PIPES



Sanitary and disinfecting wipes should not be flushed down the toilet. They do not break apart or degrade in the wastewater system like toilet paper does. With so many people flushing wipes, increases in clogged pipes, broken pumps, and residential backups are real possibilities. These can pull limited resources away from where they are needed, expose staff to multiple biological hazards, and cost your city thousands of dollars to fix.

DISCARD WIPES AND PAPER TOWELS IN THE TRASH

Paper towels, napkins, sanitary wipes, plastic, and most other things cannot be flushed down the toilet. Even wipes that say “flushable” should not be flushed.

The only things that should ever go down your toilet are human waste and toilet paper.

The solution to this issue is easy: throw wipes and paper towels in the trash instead of the toilet.



INCREASED USE OF DISINFECTANTS

The process of cleaning wastewater includes using helpful bacteria to break down human waste so the effluent (treated wastewater) can be safely discharged into the environment. The amount of anti-bacterial chemicals going down residential drains directly or on anti-bacterial wipes has increased dramatically.

Products that can kill bacteria and viruses in your home can also kill the bacteria we rely on to process waste at treatment facilities or in your own septic system. This reduces our ability to produce clean, safe water and causes upsets that ripple all the way through the system.



BE SMART ABOUT YOUR USAGE

To minimize chemical disposal, make sure to dilute bleach and other cleaners to the recommended amount. All bottles have a guide for how much disinfectant to add to water to get the desired results.

Be mindful of your chemical usage. Please use the right amount of cleaning product to keep your home clean and not more than is necessary. Avoid any unnecessary flushing of such chemicals down your sink or toilet.



THANK YOU FOR KEEPING OUR WASTEWATER SYSTEMS FUNCTIONING!

As the EPA has said, it is critical that the nation has “fully operational wastewater services” to contain the virus and protect against other health risks.