

Don't Flush It!

Why we care

Growing sales of wipes, diapers, and other paper products, even ones designated as flushable, are wreaking havoc on municipal sewer systems. Because they do not dissolve, they clog pump station equipment. Sewer and wastewater services in Vancouver estimates that wipes alone make up half the material clogging the city's sewer system, and the costs to deal with it are passed on to the public.

Leftover pharmaceuticals, another item commonly flushed or poured down the drain, pose threats to wildlife. Wastewater treatment plants are not equipped to eliminate substances like hormones, antibiotics, antidepressants, ibuprofen, and other compounds from the water.

Simple, positive steps

- Throw all used **synthetics and paper products** except toilet paper into the trash. That includes facial tissue, paper towels, cotton balls and swabs, bandages, and bandage wrappings.
- Take unwanted **pharmaceuticals** to an authorized drop-off site. Find a list of drug drop off sites in Oregon [here](#).
- No drop off site near you?
 - Mix medicines (do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as dirt, kitty litter, or used coffee grounds; wrap the mixture in a piece of newspaper; and throw the newspaper in your household trash.
 - To recycle pill bottles, go to Metro's [Find a Recycler](#). Or if the bottle has a recycling symbol on it, check [James Recycling](#) or [Ridwell](#).

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org.