

How to keep cooking fats, oils and grease at bay

FOG. You probably think of this as a weather term, but FOG (fats, oils and grease) takes on a whole new meaning when it comes to what lies beneath our streets, lurks under manholes and clings to the insides of pipes that connect right to your very own kitchen sink. Sound like a horror film? It is scary when you consider that FOG contributes to more than half of all sanitary sewer blockages in Hampton Roads.

Poured or washed down the drain into the sanitary sewer system, FOG clings to pipe walls and builds up over time, blocking the flow of wastewater exiting a home's plumbing. This can lead to an overflow or backup of wastewater into our homes or onto our streets and down storm drains which lead straight to local waterways.

You might be surprised that the source of all this greasy buildup in our pipes is not just cooking oils or grease. You'll find it daily in your kitchen in the form of meats, butter, food scraps, dairy products, batters, dressings, sauces, and more. So, how do we fight the fat to protect pipes and prevent costly blockages and backups?

- 1) Skip the garbage disposal and always be mindful of what you wash down the drain.
- 2) Use a basket strainer to catch food particles and toss them in the trash or compost bin.
- 3) Scrape plates and wipe cookware with a paper towel prior to washing.
- 4) Never pour used cooking grease down the drain. Instead, pour it into an empty, heat-safe container, like a soup can, let it cool and harden, then toss it out with the garbage.

Money-saving Tip:

There are plenty of ways to spend \$150 dollars. A visit from the plumber shouldn't be one of them. To avoid sewage backups and unnecessary bills, keep the following oily, greasy foods out of your drain and garbage disposal: butter/margarine, lards/shortening, cake batter, icing, food scraps, dairy products (yoghurt, sour cream, creamed cheese, etc.), salad dressings and sauces. Search for more info at askHRgreen.org.