

How to Avoid the Clog Monster? Keep the Wipes Out of Pipes!

(Hampton Roads, Va., Feb. 9, 2023) – When it comes to the toilet, do you know which items are flushable and the ones that are not? According to the people behind the region-wide askHRgreen.org public awareness and education campaign, it is time for a tutorial. Only water, toilet paper and one’s personal business should be flushed down the toilet.



“Hampton Roads sewer systems are designed to transport these three things only,” said Katie Cullipher, an askHRgreen.org team leader. “Flushing anything else can lead to clogged pipes, expensive plumbing repairs and service interruptions for both you and your neighbors.”

What Not to Flush

A common culprit of backed up toilets is the so-called “flushable” wipe. Made of fibrous materials, wipes do not degrade and break down the way toilet paper does. According to Cullipher, it is the equivalent of flushing a handkerchief down the commode.

Other household items that should never be flushed include cat litter, cigarette butts, cotton swabs, diapers/diaper liners, dryer sheets, facial tissues, family planning products, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, toilet bowl scrubbing pads, fats/oils/grease/food scraps from the kitchen, and dental floss (which can wrap around other items creating monster-sized clogs).

When a clog or breakdown occurs, untreated sewage can back up into the home and neighborhood streets, where it can enter storm drains and waterways. A dangerous pollutant, untreated sewage causes sudden increases in nitrogen and bacteria, resulting in declines to local aquatic life (such as plants, fish and crabs), beach closures and health warnings on local seafood consumption.

Clogged pipes and backups can also be expensive. If a clog occurs in the home’s plumbing, the responsibility and cost of repairs fall on the homeowner or resident. If a backup

occurs in the municipal sewer line, the cost of repairs could be passed on to the home's occupant and neighbors in the form of higher utility fees.

To encourage Hampton Roads residents about "what not to flush," Cullipher and the askHRgreen.org team have posted informative news, graphics, tips and an animated video featuring the Clog Monster on the group's website and social media platforms.

"Something as simple as knowing what not to flush can have a big impact on our environment in Hampton Roads," Cullipher said. "Only water, your personal business and toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet. And that's it."

For more information about what not to flush, visit askHRgreen.org/wipes/.

Good to Know: Never Flush These Items Down the Toilet:

Cat litter

Cigarette butts

Cotton swabs

Dental floss

Diapers and diaper liners

Dryer sheets

Facial tissues

Fats, oils, grease and food scraps from the kitchen

Family planning products

Feminine hygiene products

Paper towels

Toilet bowl scrubbing pads

Wipes (even if they are labeled flushable) including baby wipes, personal hygiene wipes and all-purpose cleaning wipes

Visual assets are available at this link: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/we7khg1f2d9qc2ol0z2sa/h?dl=0&rlkey=5bmihtdjx3ggaeqavofwv5vjv>

About askHRgreen.org askHRgreen.org is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads – from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the town of Smithfield; and HRSD. Like

askHRgreen.org on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the “Let’s Talk Green” [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.

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