

# Keep the water cycle running smoothly.

How to save your drains  
and help the cycle.



**Scottish  
Water**

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# At Scottish Water we are always working so the water cycle never stops.

We maintain and improve over 30,000 miles of sewer pipes which take waste water away from homes and business premises across Scotland. We then treat this at over 1,800 waste water treatment works before returning it to the environment.

Every year there are over 37,000 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 that clog up the cycle are caused by either inappropriate items being put down the toilet, or fat, oil and grease being put down the sink.

The waste water drain which runs from your house to the public sewer is usually about 4 inches 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.

We believe the best way to tackle blocked drains and sewer flooding is to work together with you to help prevent blockages that can clog up the cycle in the first place.

Here are some simple tips that will help save your drains and protect your home, your neighbours and your local environment...



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## In the bathroom

It's easy, just follow our **Three P's** rule and only flush pee, poo and toilet paper. Everything else should go in the bin, not down your toilet. Make it easy to save your drains – keep a bin in the bathroom for you to quickly, safely and hygienically dispose of all the 'never flush' personal items†

Your bathroom checklist of 'never flush' items:

- all wipes (baby, personal cleansing, toilet and household cleaning) – even if the pack says 'flushable';
- sanitary items (sanitary towels, tampons, liners, applicators and backing strips);
- 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 for any personal items.



## In the kitchen

Fat, oil and grease in liquid form may not appear to be harmful as they don't get stuck in the plughole, but as they cool they congeal, harden and stick to the inside of drains and sewers. This builds up over time, which can cause blocked pipes and flooding. Pouring hot water down your plughole will not help to dissolve any fat, 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:

- Fat, oil and grease – leave to cool and then scrape into a sealable container and recycle or put it in the bin\*.
- Give plates, pots, 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 fat, oil and grease in your area.

# Never flush down the toilet:



# Never pour down the sink:




Alternative formats of this leaflet can be made available free of charge. For information on Braille, large print, audio and a variety of languages, please call our Customer Helpline.

If you have a disability, medical condition or other reason where you may need additional assistance from Scottish Water then please contact us and we can add your name, address and requirements to our confidential Additional Support Register.

We record all calls for quality and training purposes.



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