

Fats, Oils, and Greases aren't just bad for your arteries and your waistline; they're bad for sewers, too.

Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home interiors, and threaten the environment. An increasingly common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

Where does the grease come from?

Most of us know grease as the byproduct of cooking.

Grease is found in such things as:

- * Meat fats
- * Lard
- * Cooking oil
- * Shortening
- * Butter and Margarine
- * Food scraps
- * Baking Goods
- * Sauces
- * Dairy products

Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes (both on your property and in the streets). Over time, the grease can build up and block the entire pipe.

Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. These units only shred solid material into smaller pieces and do not prevent grease from going down the drain.

Commercial additives, including detergents, that claim to dissolve grease may pass grease down the line and cause problems in other areas.



What we can do to help

The easiest way to solve the grease problem and help prevent overflows of raw sewage is to keep this material out of the sewer system in the first place.

There are several ways to do this;

- Raw sewage overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home;
- An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid for by you, the homeowner;
- Raw sewage overflowing into parks, yards and streets;
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms; and
- An increase in operation and maintenance costs for local sewer departments, which causes higher sewer bills for customers.



1. Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets,
2. Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, and grills and cooking surfaces into a can or the trash for disposal (or recycling where available).
3. Do not put grease down garbage disposals. Put baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty the drain baskets/strainers into the trash for disposal.
4. Speak with your friends and neighbors about the problem of grease in the sewer system and how to keep it out. Call your local sewer system authority if you have any questions.