



It's not something we think about when we pour leftover grease down the drain, but wastewater treatment plant operators across the state wish folks would put their pipes on a fat-free diet.

Most blockages in sewer systems can be traced to the presence of fats, oils, and grease, creating sewage spills and sewage overflows both onto private property and into city streets. It can also mean more frequent pumping of septic tanks.

Many people believe that pouring grease down the drain and following it with lots of hot water will keep the fats liquefied and carry them safely through the pipes. This is not true. Fats, oils, and grease cool down very quickly and can solidify after traveling only a few feet.

Raw sewage in the pipes will attach to fats, oils, and grease, creating impenetrable globs that back up sewer lines. These globs of fat and waste are difficult to disinfect at treatment plants and can allow disease-causing pathogens to enter nearby streams, lakes, and rivers.

"Cleanups are difficult and costly," explained Lynda Jamison, a water-quality specialist with the Washington Department of Ecology. "Blockages can cause raw sewage to back up into streets and possibly even into homes and businesses."

You can help keep fats from clogging pipes by disposing grease properly:

- Never pour fats, oils, or grease down the drain.
- Never flush fats, oils, or grease down the toilet.
- Always put grease in the trash.

Pour hot oils or grease into heat-proof containers, such as a tin can, and cool before putting it in the trash. You may even freeze the grease for easier disposal. Wipe greasy pans and dishes with paper towels before washing them and throw the paper towels into the trash to keep as much grease as possible out of your drains.

These tips can help prevent expensive plumbing repairs and sewage overflows. You can save yourself some repair bills, keep our rivers and streams clean. Put your pipes on a fat-free diet. Dispose of grease properly.

This is a photo of the grease we take off the clarifier every day at the Shelton Wastewater Treatment Plant—we get a 90 gallon can each day!

