

## **Help Stop Clogging Pipes...Don't Flush Wipes!**

**Save yourself and Windber Area Authority from costly repairs and/or replacement bills – put wipes, rags, and towels in the trash, not the toilet**



Many household cleaning products are labeled and marketed as disposable; many baby hygiene products are labeled both disposable and flushable. And while these products may be marketed as a convenience item in this way, the truth is that these household wipes and cleaning towelettes have the ability to clog and stop up not only the sewer line on your property, but also can cause blockage and service problems in the public sewer system and pump stations. Unlike toilet paper, these products don't break down once they are flushed. They can cause blockages in your on-site side sewer, especially older pipelines that may have grease, roots, or other obstructions already existing. A repair of the side sewer line can leave the homeowner with a nasty repair bill. On a larger scale when these products make their way into the public

sewer system they collect together and cause clogs in the sewer main lines and get tangled in pump stations requiring repair or replacement of equipment.

### **We need everyone's help...**

The following items should never be flushed into the sewer system:

- Disinfecting wipes,
- Baby wipes,
- Q-tips,
- Toilet cleaning pads,
- Mop or "Swiffer" type refills,
- Paper towels,
- Moist towelettes, and
- Any consumer item that is not toilet paper.

# Are wipes safe to flush in sewer systems?

Dear Heloise: I am a retired engineer from a water-system company. Recently, I met with my fellow workers, who are still employed, for lunch. They complained that BABY WIPES coming into the plant are causing a huge problem.

Apparently, more and more of these wipes are being disposed of in sewer systems, and they are non-degradable. They bind the screens going into the plant and knot together to form ropes as long as 40 feet. Further upstream, they form into balls and plug sewer pipes. Please advise your readers to purchase only biodegradable products or deposit those that are non-degradable somewhere besides the sewer system. — Mike F. in Texas

Mike, thank you for this good reminder. How right you are! There are biodegradable wipes and ones that should NOT be flushed. Wipes are deemed flushable if they meet certain guidelines, such as clearing toilets and properly maintained pipes. However, most city water systems state that they are NOT SAFE to flush. So, folks, please don't flush anything that shouldn't be. READ the packaging. This also can prevent a plumbing bill! — Heloise

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