

Cleaning wipes, flushable wipes, facial tissues and other disinfectant products are flying off the shelves these days as people seek to keep the novel coronavirus from entering their homes, but disposing of these products as you would toilet paper can create another health hazard unrelated to COVID-19. Officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently issued a warning urging people to only flush toilet paper, and to dispose of disinfectant wipes and other non-flushable items in the garbage. While the EPA encourages disinfecting your environment to prevent the spread of COVID-19, never flush these items down your toilet!

## Flushable Does Not Mean Disposable

Just because the package says "flushable" doesn't mean it's true. Many items marketed as "disposable" and/or "flushable" do not degrade like toilet paper. They end up clogging pipes, tangling pumps and causing sewer backups into streets, businesses and homes. Paper towels, "disposable" wipes, cleaning wipes and other moist towelettes that are described as "flushable" do not dissolve, but instead accumulate in our sewers. These wipes are made of a thick material the consistency of cloth and unlike toilet paper, will not break down after flushing. These products are able to be called "flushable" because they will pass through the S-bend of your toilet.



Although they will flush, this causes issues in the sewer pipes and pump stations. When these items cause blockages, the Utility is responsible for cleaning the main sewer lines. We frequently clear blockages caused by rags and wipes. Even if the product's label states that it is "flushable", it is safer and more environmentally correct to place these items in the trash instead of the toilet. Just because it states it is safe to flush doesn't mean it will not harm the sewer system.

## Think Trash, Not Toilet

When the wrong things go down the toilet, it not only creates costly back-ups of your household plumbing, it can create problems at the wastewater treatment plant and with the environment. Items such as baby wipes, rags, towels, latex gloves, sanitary napkins, dental floss and prophylactics that are flushed down the toilet, enter the sanitary sewer system and can create problems that are costly and time-consuming to correct. That's why it is so important to only flush your "personal contributions" to the wastewater treatment plant. Wastewater treatment facilities are sophisticated systems designed to treat organic wastes,

such as human waste and household wastewater, with sensitive natural processes doing the work of breaking down the waste safely. Untreatable products can interfere with these natural processes along environment. What does make it through must be captured, pulled out of the system, and trucked to a landfill. That's a very expensive, labor-intensive way to dispose of something. Please flush wisely to protect pipes and the environment.



# Can't Flush This!



## Some Things Don't Belong in the Toilet

- Baby Wipes and Diapers
- Cleaning Sponges
- Cotton Swabs
- Dental Floss
- Facial Tissue
- Feminine Products
- Flushable Wipes
- Household Cleaners
- Latex Gloves
- Plastic Items of any type
- Prescription Drugs
- Rags and Towels
- Syringes
- Toys
- Underwear



## TriCo Regional Sewer Utility

10701 N. College Avenue, Suite A  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46280

Tel: 317-844-9200

Fax: 317-844-9203