

## **Going Green in Londonderry**

### **No Wipes In the Pipes**

Personal care products: we're using more and more of them in our daily lives. But the allure of convenience and comfort can mask the risk to your home, your wallet and the environment--especially when it comes to the more than 600 kinds of wipes being sold to us these days.

Here, if you'll pardon the pun, is the poop: **Put nothing in your toilet besides human waste and toilet paper.** Flushing anything else—like wipes--is a risk to your septic system, since it can clog pipes, pumps, and even manholes in communities with sewers. Here are some testimonials:

- “These wipes don’t break down in water. I was up till 2am snaking our line, because everything backed up into our basement; had to disinfect the entire floor.”
- “I love these wipes, but the pipes in my house hate them...\$300 plumber bill and what I’m sure will be a lengthy process in fixing our damaged dry wall and carpet.”

This is the short list of items people regret flushing, according to the Wastewater industry: paper towels and napkins; baby wipes; feminine hygiene products; and household wipes. And by the way, about 10% of system clogs are caused by wipes that are advertised as flushable.

Don’t confuse “flushable” with “dispersible,” i.e. something that quickly breaks down. Toilet paper decomposes rapidly in water. Unfortunately, many consumers don’t realize that wipes (and the other items mentioned above) do not. Meanwhile, our purchases of wipes have been increasing 10% annually.

Needless to say, don’t flush this stuff either: cigarette butts; cotton swabs; food wrappers; dental floss; disposable toilet brushes; disposable diapers; cat litter. And don’t flush unwanted drugs--they can contaminate your ground water. Instead, drop them off at the police department. We are happy to report that the LPD will be announcing a 24/7 drug drop-off program for Londonderry residents sometime this fall.

The moral of the story? Don’t trade peace of mind for convenience. It can be a huge pain in the butt.

*~ Courtesy of Londonderry’s Solid Waste and Environment Committee and NH Department of Environmental Services ~*