

## Going Green in Londonderry

### **A Recipe for a Thanksgiving Disaster**

Who would think the recipes you choose for Thanksgiving could cause a problem, other than the heartburn you get from Aunt Martha's green bean casserole. But fat from meat, sauces, baking goods, cooking oil, lard, margarine, shortening, and butter can spell trouble for your septic system--at Thanksgiving or any other time.

It begins when these messy residues are washed down the kitchen sink. As the water cools, these fatty, greasy and oily (FOG) foods solidify in your pipes. Over time they stick and coat the septic or sewer lines meant to whisk away unwanted liquids. The FOG build up can restrict and even stop the flow of water, producing a backup that can damage property and quickly spoil your holiday plans. Once clogged, most folks have to hire a plumber to clean their pipes, an unwelcome expense.

The good news is you can avoid all this and protect your sewer or septic system by keeping FOG out of the sink:

- Scrape grease and food waste from plates, pots, pans and grills into a trash can
- Small amounts of cooking oil, such as meat drippings, can be soaked up with a paper towel and thrown into the trash
- Keep baskets and strainers in sinks to catch food scraps
- Never pour oil or grease into a drain or toilet, and don't put grease or meats in garbage disposals
- Don't pour hot oil or grease into plastic or styrofoam!
- Let grease solidify in a sturdy metal container--like a soup or coffee can--before putting it into the trash. Refrigeration quickly congeals oil and fat
- Mix larger amounts of cooking oil with an absorbent material like sawdust or kitty litter before putting in the garbage. Dispose of large amounts by dividing it over several collection days

Armed with these simple tips, you can rest a little easier this holiday season knowing that your Currier & Ives picture-perfect holiday won't be ruined by a plumbing disaster. For more information on FOG management, contact Ray Gordon with the DES Wastewater Engineering Bureau at [ray.gordon@des.nh.gov](mailto:ray.gordon@des.nh.gov).

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