

Fat Free Sewers

Fats, oils and greases aren't just bad for your waistline and your health; they're bad for sewers too. Just as fat can clog your arteries, it can clog your sewer tap and the public sewer lines making sewer overflows and backups more likely. Fort Wayne City Utilities spends an estimated \$400,000 per year to clean grease out of sewer lines and to prevent it from building up.

Grease is a by-product of cooking that comes from meat fats, lard, oil, shortening, food scraps, even baked goods. When these materials are washed down the sink, the grease sticks on the sides of the sewer pipes – both on private property and in the public sewer system. Over time, grease can build up to the point where it blocks the entire line. Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. Products such as detergents that claim to dissolve grease may just pass it down the line and cause problems elsewhere. And while hot water may appear to make grease go away, it just melts the solids which can harden again when they hit a cold sewer pipe.

How can homeowners help reduce the chances of backups caused by oil and grease buildup in sewers;

- 1 Never pour grease down the drain, into the toilet or into a storm drain.
- 2 For a large amount of oil, pour the cooled liquid into a milk jug. Fill the jug about half full, then add kitty litter to absorb the liquid. Put the lid on the jug and place it in the trash.
- 3 Scrape grease and food scraps into the trash and wipe greasy dishes and pans with paper towels before washing them. Dispose of the paper toweling in the trash.
- 4 Place baskets or strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids and empty the strainers into the trash.
- 5 Seek out opportunities to share your knowledge with friends and neighbors who may not know about the risks and costs of putting grease down the drain.