



Fact Sheet

Protecting the environment

Putting the wrong things down our water pipes can cause damage to the system that protects our local environment, creeks, rivers and oceans. By only putting the right things into the sewer system, we can significantly reduce the risk of blockages and hazardous spills, as well as ensure that water arriving at our treatment plants is fit to be processed to then be released safely back into the environment.

What is sewage?

It is all the water that goes down the kitchen sink, the shower, bathroom and laundry drains and anything flushed down the toilet.

Common problems

The most common problem with sewer pipes is blockages. Over 25 per cent of all blockages in Yarra Valley Water's system result from putting the wrong items down sinks, drains and toilets.

Blockages can cause raw sewage to spill into the environment, your garden or even your home.

What can I do?

We can all play a part in helping the treatment process by being aware of our own actions and by realising the kind of sewage we generate has a real affect on the treatment process and on the environment.

Strain your sink

Everything that goes down the kitchen, laundry and bathroom sink or that is flushed down the toilet ends up in the sewerage system.

Fats, oils, food scraps and other household waste placed down your sink can cause blockages in the pipes under your home or in Yarra Valley Water's pipes.

Using a strainer in your sinks will prevent all kinds of materials, which can stick to the sides of pipes, from going down the drain.

Don't dump chemicals

Products such as motor oils, paints, pesticides, plastics and other non-biodegradable products cannot be treated and should not enter the sewerage system because they may contain chemicals that harm the treatment process.

You can further help protect the environment by keeping many of your household products and chemicals out of the sewerage system.

Sewage treatment process

Sewage is collected through our network of pipes and pump stations before being transferred to a treatment plant where waste and bacteria are removed.

Before being released back into the environment, the treated water must meet Environment Protection Authority licence guidelines.

Am I responsible for any of the sewerage system?

Yes. You are responsible for all of the pipes and fittings within your property down to the connection point to Yarra Valley Water's pipes (usually near your property boundary).

This means you are responsible for any repair, replacement or maintenance costs associated with fixing the pipes up to this point.

Things to remember

You can help the environment and safeguard your home by taking these simple steps to keep our sewers healthy:

- Don't pour cooking oil or fat down the sink. Wipe greasy pots and pans with a paper towel and throw the oily paper in the bin.
- Don't pour medicines, paint, pesticides or other hazardous chemicals down the drain. Ask your local pharmacy or Council for advice on how to dispose of these.
- Don't flush cotton buds, nappies, condoms, sanitary products or their wrappers down the toilet. Throw them in your rubbish bin.
- Use less detergent. The average household uses three times more detergent than manufacturers recommend.
- Choose washing detergent with a low salt content. Concentrated detergents often contain much less salt than conventional varieties. Too much salt in the sewerage system means we cannot recycle the water.
- Learn about composting your food scraps.

For more information

For more information you can call 13 1721 or visit the Yarra Valley Water website www.yvw.com.au

For language assistance call TIS 13 1450

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