



Fats, oil and grease clog pipes and cause sewer backups.

Fat, Oil and Grease in sewer pipes, referred to as FOG, create pollution problems in many communities. FOG enters sewer pipes through residential and commercial sink drains.

Once in the sewer, FOG sticks to the pipe and thickens. FOG can build up and eventually block the entire pipe. Blockages in sewer pipes can send sewage backward – out of manholes into streets and rivers, or up floor drains into homes. The result – hazardous sewage overflows that pollute the environment.



DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES

Water Pollution Control Plant
Pretreatment Program
703-228-6881



**PREVENT
SEWER
BACKUPS AT
HOME**

*Arlington County Department
of Environmental Services*



What is FOG?

FOG stands for Fats, Oils and Grease from cooking food and cleaning up.

FOG is found in:

- grease from cooking
- cooking oil
- butter, margarine or shortening
- meat fats
- lard

Why is FOG a problem?

Residential households contribute to FOG build-up in the sewer lines from washing grease down the drain.

Sewer backups can cause damage to homes, are a health hazard, and threaten the environment. Sewer pipes blocked by grease are an increasingly common cause of sewer backups and overflows.

Keep Pipes Clear

YES

- Pour or scrape greasy food waste into a can or jar.
- Allow the grease to cool in the container, and throw in the trash.
- After pouring the grease into a can, use a paper towel to wipe grease out of the pan prior to washing.
- Mix used vegetable oil with an absorbent material (cat litter or coffee grounds) in a sealable container, and then throw in the trash.
- Keep drains clean by pouring 1/2 cup baking soda down the drain followed by 1/2 cup vinegar. Wait 15 minutes, then rinse with hot water.

NO

- Never pour fat, oil or grease down a drain or garbage disposal.
- Never use hot water to rinse grease off cookware, utensils, dishes or surfaces.



Pour grease into a can and let it cool, and then throw it in the trash.

Trash it, Don't flush it

Besides FOG, these items should **NEVER** be flushed down the toilet: medication, paper towels or napkins, condoms, tampons, feminine napkins, baby wipes, and wipes labeled as "flushable". Throw these items in the trash instead. These items do not break down like toilet paper, and can create blockages in your pipes and in the County sewer main pipe – which could cause a sewage backup. These items can also cause expensive damage to pumps in the sewer lift stations and at the wastewater treatment plant.