

# Blocked Drains

How to avoid them in your home





## This leaflet contains information about preventing blockages to your drains and sewer and what to do if you have a blocked drain.

**Thousands of homes suffer disruption caused by blocked drains and sewer flooding each year, which is easily avoidable.**

Drainage pipes are only designed to carry water, human waste and toilet roll. Other items can get lodged in the pipe and build up a blockage. Blocked drains stop waste water from leaving your property, and when waste water blocks up, it can come out of the toilet or sink and flood your home.

### **What not to flush**

Blockages are caused by people flushing everyday items like cotton buds and wet wipes down the toilet or rinsing things like fat, oil and food scrapings down the sink. Remember, only flush the **3Ps** down your toilet: Pee, Poo and Paper.

Items which should not be flushed down your toilet or poured down the sink include:

- X** Cooking oil, fat or grease
- X** Food scrapings
- X** Wet wipes/multipurpose wipes – even those labelled as ‘flushable’
- X** Cotton wool, cotton pads and cotton buds
- X** Disposable nappies and nappy liners
- X** Sanitary products
- X** Condoms
- X** Plastic bags and wrappers
- X** Needles and syringes
- X** Old clothing and rags
- X** Cat litter
- X** Paint and paint thinners

## Disposing of items responsibly

Anything other than toilet paper should be put in the bin.

- Some water companies provide free 'fat traps' to stop fats, oils and greases from getting into the drains. Contact your local water and sewerage company for details.
- Some local councils provide a separate food waste bin, for the disposal of fats, oil and grease.
- Paint and paint thinners should be taken to a rubbish tip or recycling centre.

Water and sewage companies pay to unblock public sewers and remove dangerous chemicals, but the costs are passed on in their customers' bills. By disposing of waste responsibly we can all help to keep our bills down. Your local council can give advice on household waste collections in your area, and can tell you which items can be collected for recycling.



## What to do if you have a blocked drain?

It can be difficult to locate a blockage in a pipe. If your neighbours are also experiencing slow drains or water is backing up, the blockage could be in the public sewer. Call your water company to check, if it is a problem with the main sewer, they will be able to fix it.

If the blockage is only affecting your drains, please call us on **0800 131 3348 (0300 123 3511 from a mobile)** and we will arrange for a contractor to come to your home.

## What's the difference between a drain and a sewer?

A drain is a pipe that drains water and waste from a building.

A lateral drain is a pipe that carries the waste water away from the building to the sewer. They are located outside the building usually under a pavement or road.

A sewer collects water and waste from a number of buildings in. Most sewers are owned and maintained by your water company, and some are privately owned. Some properties aren't connected to a sewer, they are connected to a cesspool, septic tank or treatment plant.

This leaflet can be translated into other languages, large print and Braille or recorded on to an audio CD.  
Please contact us for details.

If you need to speak to a Sanctuary member of staff in your own language, please contact your local office and they will arrange an interpreter for you.

**0800 131 3348 (landline) 0300 123 3511 (mobile)**

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