

A failing septic system can cost you thousands of dollars to repair and can be a serious health risk to your family and pets.



Trash, Save, Return: 3 Steps to Protect Your Septic System

- 1. Trash these items, don't drop them down the toilet or drain:**
 - Kitchen scraps — use a sink strainer, not a garbage disposal.
 - Fats, oils and grease.
 - Baby wipes, tissues, paper towels, excessive toilet paper.
 - Floss, hair, feminine products, condoms, kitty litter and pet waste.
- 2. Save your money:**
 - Don't use septic additives. At best they do nothing; at worst they can kill the good bacteria in your system.
 - Don't use more than the label's recommended amount of bleach, detergent or drain de-clogger.
 - Don't use bath oils.
 - Use water saving technologies to save on your water usage and to keep from overflowing your septic tank.
- 3. Return these items to a designated return center:**
 - Oil-based paint, harsh chemicals or cleaners — take to a household hazardous waste drop-off day in your city or county.
 - Expired or unwanted medications — take to your pharmacist or a medicine take-back day in your city or county.

For more information on septic system rules, care guidelines, or public health, check out these additional resources:

Galveston County Health District at www.gchd.org/ech/sewage.htm

Texas AgriLife Extension Service at ossf.tamu.edu/

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality at
www.tceq.texas.gov/licensing/ossf/ossfhomeowners.html



Your Health, Your Environment, Your Septic System. It's Up to You!



TEXAS COASTAL WATERSHED
P R O G R A M

1250 Bay Area Blvd., Ste. C
Houston, TX 77058

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Do's and Don'ts of Septic Maintenance Quick List:

- Do have your tank pumped out and system inspected every 3-5 years depending on the size of the tank and of your family. Contact the Galveston County Health District for a list of septic contractors licensed in your area.
- Do keep a record of pumping, inspections and repairs. It will come in handy when you want to sell or rent your house.
- Do commit to water conservation. Repair drips and leaks. Use water-saving showers, toilets and faucets.
- Do use your garbage disposal sparingly. It puts a heavy burden on your septic system.
- Do divert roof drains and surface water run-off away from your septic system and leach field.
- Do keep a map of the location of your system components and make sure all household members are aware of what is underground.
- Do use household chemicals such as bleach, disinfectants, and drain and toilet bowl cleaners only in accordance with product labels.
- Don't drive or park anything heavier than a riding lawn mower over any part of your system!
- Don't plant shrubs or trees over your system! Roots may clog and damage your lines or leach field.
- Don't use your toilet as a trash can or for food disposal!
- Don't dispose of cooking oil, fat and grease in your septic system.
- Don't use commercial septic system additives. At best they are harmless and a waste of money; at worst they hurt your system.
- Don't make or allow any repairs to your system without the proper permits from the Health District.
- Don't pour hazardous household chemicals, paints, or unused prescriptions down the drain.