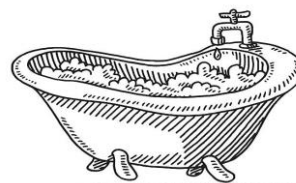


## Help your Septic System - and our lakes!

Contaminants in the wastewater entering your septic system include nitrate, phosphorus, disease-causing bacteria, viruses and parasites. Careful use of your septic will prevent these contaminants from entering the ground water, your well water and local surface water (creeks, rivers and lakes).



Waste water enters the septic tank from the house. Solids settle to the bottom of the tank (where they stay until they are pumped out every few years), and the liquid exits the tank near its top and flows into the drainfield. The sewage trickles through soil for 2 or 3 feet, where aerobic bacteria and minerals in the soil break down the remaining organic material and kill most of the remaining germs. The soil also locks up chemicals such as phosphates.



## Don't block your septic system!

**Only human waste and toilet paper should be flushed into your septic.** Anything else may plug the exit pipes or the holes in the drainage pipes. Do not flush or put down a sink or bathtub: ☉ **food scraps** ☉ grease and fats (wipe cooking pans before washing) ☉ baking supplies, coffee grounds, tea leaves (flour etc). ☉ Do not use a **garburator** in your kitchen sink ☉ excessive amounts of hair **conditioner** and fabric softener that form a hard gum and plug the pipes ☉ paper towels ☉ menstrual pads or tampons ☉ condoms ☉ disposable diapers ☉ baby or hygienic **disposable wipes**, even if they say they are safe for septic systems ☉ medications ☉ any other objects ☉ Don't use septic tank **additives** because they may cause harm by adding extra solids to the system that can clog your drainage field and the chemicals they contain can also pollute groundwater and surface water. ☉ Avoid liquids that will kill bacteria in the drain field, such as excessive amounts of **bleach**, heavy cleaners, antibacterial soap, **salts**, paint and thinner, fluid from washing brushes ☉ Do not connect sump pumps, pools or **water softener** drainage to the septic system ► use a **filter** on your washing machine and a metal mesh **hair net** on your sink, tub or shower drain

# Don't flood your septic system!

**Reduce your water usage.** A septic system has a lower capacity to receive water than a city sewage system. Excessive water can flood the drainage field until it is saturated, potentially causing the septic system to **back up into the house** or causing a sewage smell or forcing the contaminants in the wastewater to leave the drainage field **unprocessed by the bacteria** in the soil.

## Be aware of your water usage:

Don't run the water until it's cold or hot – ► keep a pitcher of cold water in the fridge & use the kettle or microwave to heat it ► A **dishwasher** uses 13 liters of water – wait until it's full. Hand washing dishes uses at least twice as much water. ► Turn off the tap when brushing your **teeth**. ► A full bathtub uses up to 80 litres of water, whereas a 5-minute shower uses about 75 liters. A water-efficient **showerhead** uses approximately 9 liters per minute, whereas an older style showerhead uses about 19 liters per minute. ► On average, a load of **laundry** uses 70 liters of water, so wait until you have a full load to do a wash ► A full flush toilet uses 11 liters of water, whereas a **dual flush** uses 4.5 liters for a full flush and 3 liters per half flush

**Space out the use of your water.** ► Schedule your **laundry** throughout the week rather than doing it all on one day ☹ Don't run the dishwasher and the washing-machine simultaneously. ► Rent a port-a-potty if you have a big crowd. ► In order to avoid saturation of the drainage bed, divert the rainwater from your **eavestroughs**.

**Only grass or clover should be planted on top of the drainage field or septic tank to keep long roots from clogging the pipes.** The bacteria in your drainage area requires oxygen to process wastewater contaminants and heavy weight can pack down the soil and **break the pipes** ☹ **Do not park** cars, trucks, snowmobiles, boats or trailers etc. on your drainage field ☹ Do not put patios, decks, carports, storage sheds, sports courts, landscaping plastic or allow grazing animals on the drainage area, the drainage reserve area or the septic tank. Remove any **trees or bushes** that start to grow on the drainage field.



**It's not about how many people your cottage can sleep,  
it's about how many people your septic can sleep!**