

Let's Tackle the Grease in This Kitchen!

Protect your Plumbing and the Environment

Why is cooking grease a problem?

If you pour cooking grease down your drain, it may build up, block your pipes, and cause rancid odors or messy, costly sewage backups in your home.

It can also clog City sewer lines. In fact, grease is the leading cause of dry weather sewer overflows, which are a potential threat to the environment.

And don't believe the old wives' tale about running hot water after pouring grease down the drain: It doesn't work. The grease eventually cools, then congeals and coats pipes. When enough grease builds up, it can block your plumbing or the City sewer lines.

Where is grease produced?

Restaurants, condominiums, apartment buildings, homes, schools, churches, food-processing plants, shopping malls, hospitals, hotels, and many more locations all produce grease.

Grease is a by-product of cooking and is found in things like these:

- Meat fats
- Food scraps
- Lard
- Baking Goods
- Cooking Oil
- Sauces
- Shortening
- Dairy Products
- Butter and Margarine

Never pour grease down sink drains or other drains. Scrape grease and food scraps from all cookware and dishes into can or trash for disposal.

What problems are caused by grease?

- Clogged drains or toilets
- Sewage backup into your home
- Sewer overflows in neighborhood streets, yards and parks
- Rancid odors
- Expensive cleanup, repair, and replacement of damaged property.
- Potential contact with bacteria and viruses that can cause illness.
- Higher operating and maintenance costs, potentially resulting in here sewer bills for you.

How can you help protect your plumbing and our environment?

- Never pour grease down sinks, toilets, or any drains.
- Pour grease into a can for disposal in the trash. You can make your own grease can using any metal can (not plastic, which melts) and disposable, heat-resistant oven bags. Just toss the bags in the trash (after grease cools) and reuse the can. **(Note: Please use caution when pouring hot grease or wait for it to cool slightly. Hot grease can burn skin.)**
- Scrape grease and food scraps into can or trash for disposal.
- Use strainers in sinks to catch food scraps, and empty the strainers into the trash.
- Don't rely on a garbage disposal to get rid of grease—it grinds food into smaller pieces, but it doesn't keep grease from going down the drain.
- Wipe cookware and dishes before washing. Commercial additives in detergents only dissolve grease temporarily.
- Clean kitchen exhaust system filters routinely.

Safety Tip

If you have a grease related sewer backup, avoid contact or wash with soap and water. The Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says skin contact isn't a serious health risk, but swallowing bacteria or a virus may cause illness. So always wash your hands before preparing or eating food, after using the bathroom (or helping another as a caregiver), and after touching objects exposed to a backup.