

# GENERAL GUIDELINES ON HOW TO AVOID STOPPAGES AND MAINTAIN CLEAN DRAINS

## AVOID KITCHEN SINK STOPPAGES

1. Do not let any type of food go down the kitchen drain. **Peels, skins, husks, coffee grounds, eggshells, and fat cause a large majority of sink clogs and backups.** Therefore, throwing these scraps in the garbage instead of down the drain, or starting a compost pile, will save your drain.
2. **One of the biggest culprits behind kitchen sink stoppages is grease.** As grease cools, it clings to the sides of pipes. Over time, more grease builds up and traps other debris. Eventually, you'll end up with a clogged drain. Instead, save a coffee can to store excess grease in until it's cool enough to throw away in the trash.
3. **Clean your kitchen sink and drain often.** A Clean Drain Is A Clear Drain. Pour vinegar down your drain, then flush it with hot water. Baking soda also works well.

## WHAT NOT TO FLUSH

- For the most part, you should avoid flushing anything other than waste and toilet paper in your toilets. In particular, here are some commonly-flushed items that can cause a problem for your plumbing system:
- **Wet Wipes:** baby wipes and cleaning wipes of all kinds are commonly flushed down toilets, but even brands that claim to be flushable can often cause a clog.
- **Tissues:** Like wet wipes, tissues may seem like they're OK to flush, but some may have a difficult time breaking down with water, causing them to clump together and clog drains. Flush toilet paper only.
- **Feminine Hygiene Products:** Don't flush tampons or pads down the toilet. As a product designed to retain fluid and expand, these are some of the worst items you can flush, and are a common source of toilet stoppages.
- **Condoms:** condoms and condom wrappers can wreak havoc on your drains. Condoms can act as latex balloons that can catch and fill in your drain, causing stoppages.
- **Food:** It may seem obvious, but a surprising amount of people try to flush food down their toilets. Food should never be flushed, even liquid food products like grease or oil.
- **Toys:** Sometimes children may flush toys down the toilet, often out of curiosity. Toys can cause major stoppages, and often require a plumber to remove them.
- **Dental Floss:** Not only can dental floss cause potential clogs, but it also isn't biodegradable, so it can cause damage to waterways.
- **Q-Tips and Cotton Balls:** Q-tips, cotton balls and other cotton products can cause problems due to their tendency to clump together, particularly when exposed to water.

## KEEP YOUR BATHTUB FROM CLOGGING

1. **Use a drain cover.** Hair is one of the main causes of clogged bathtub drains. Hair clogs can easily be prevented with a hair trap or drain cover.
2. **Avoid drain clogging activities.** Do not let foreign objects like toys, brushes or washcloths go down the drain.
3. **Use Natural Solutions.** If you do notice minor blockage in your shower drain, there are a couple of tricks that might remove it. First, see if you can remove the clog with your hands or a plastic drain stick. If you can't, you'll need to loosen the clog using one or more of the following techniques:
  - Pour boiling water down the drain. Then turn on the shower on a warm setting for about five minutes.
  - Pour one cup of bleach into the drain at night. In the morning, run the warm water for a few minutes.
  - Pour  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of baking soda and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vinegar down the drain. Plug the drain for about 30 minutes, then pour boiling water down the drain.