

**--- PRESS RELEASE ---**  
***For Immediate Release***



## **DEP reminds Mainers of what not to flush**

**AUGUSTA, Maine, March 20, 2020** — Properly functioning sewer systems are extremely important for the protection of public health and to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

To help keep these systems functioning properly, the DEP is reminding people that the following products should not be flushed:

- Baby wipes or cleaning wipes
- Paper towels
- Tissues
- Dental Floss
- Tampons and sanitary products
- Cotton balls and swabs
- Cat litter
- Prescription drugs
- Over-the-counter medicines
- Cigarette butts

Unlike toilet paper, these products do not break down and once flushed they are likely to clog the plumbing in your house, in your septic system, or in the public sewer system.

When these products make their way into the public sewer system they clump together, causing very large obstructions in the sewer lines. They get tangled in pump stations requiring repair of equipment and causing backups and discharges of raw sewage into basements of homes and businesses, and into waters of the state.

Due to the potential for public works staffing shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic, response time to repair clogged sewers could be substantially delayed.

Maine DEP and wastewater treatment facilities across the state reminds everyone to make sure they are only flushing toilet paper and properly disposing of all other materials.

***For additional information, contact:***

**David R. Madore, Communications Director**

**(207) 287-5842**

**[david.madore@maine.gov](mailto:david.madore@maine.gov)**

or

**Brian Kavanah, Director, Bureau of Water Quality**

**(207) 287-7700**

**[brian.w.kavanah@maine.gov](mailto:brian.w.kavanah@maine.gov)**