

Stop Flushing and Start Trashing!

Anything that isn't biodegradable should be put in the trash instead of the toilet - or it should be recycle where possible.

If you don't know - don't flush! If there's plastic in it - definitely don't flush it. Flushing the wrong thing down the toilet can damage your household plumbing, your environment and your waste water treatment system. Waste items that belong in the trash are as follows:

- Tampons
- Condoms
- Unused medications
- Cotton swabs
- Cotton balls
- Bandage wrappers
- Wipes of any kind
- Disposable diapers
- Nursing pads
- Mini or Maxi pads
- Latex gloves
- Paper towels

Handy hints for minor plumbing problems

The best strategy for unclogging the drain will be based on its location (kitchen sink, shower, tub or toilet), the distance from the inlet to the clog and the size/components for cleaning the clog. Most clogs happen in or around the p-trap or area very close to the inlet. If you start putting water down the drain and immediately see a stoppage, then you probably have a clog around the p-trap.

WARNING: Do not use off the shelf chemical drain cleaners if you have metal in your drain pipes. The chemical can cause serious damage to the pipes. You can usually look at the p-trap under a sink to find metal. Chemical drain openers can also damage the metal plating on your hardware. These chemicals are really bad if they don't work and require mechanical removal by a plumber. Some chemical drain openers are not compatible with the PVC pipe that is used in most new homes so be sure to read the label first.

Baking soda and Vinegar

Pour ½ cup baking soda down the drain. Add ½ white vinegar and cover the drain if possible. Let set for a few minutes then pour a quart of boiling water down the drain to flush it. The combination of baking soda and vinegar can break down fatty acids into soap and glycerin, allowing the clog to wash down the drain. Do not use this method in combination with chemical drain openers as there can be a serious reaction.

Kitchen Sink Clogs

Kitchen sink clogs are usually a combination of food and grease (or fat) and bathroom clogs are usually soap and hair. Many kitchen clogs can be avoided by occasionally pouring a quart of boiling water down the drain on a routine basis. This will liquefy the grease and move it further down the pipes. You can also add vinegar and baking soda to help break down fats and make the drain smell fresher.

Bathroom Sink, Bathtub and Shower

Bathroom Sink clogs are usually made of hair and soap. The clog may be removed using the baking soda and vinegar solution. If this fails to solve your problem, then call your property manager.

Using a Plunger

The key to using a plunger is getting a mostly water tight seat with the rubber. If the plunger is not sealing, it will not put any pressure on the clog. Use a push/pull motion to dislodge the blockage. Usually pushing down develops the most force so try a few quick pulls.

Degreaser/Drain Opener

Dissolve ¼ cup dish washing detergent in 2-3 gallons boiling water and pour down drain. To avoid burns from boiling water, hold water container close to drain and pour slowly and directly into drain.

Warning - Do not use this method in combination with chemical drain openers as there can be a dangerous reaction.