

# Cooking grease is the Number One cause of sewer backups in homes.

## Why is cooking grease a problem?

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

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

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, WRC sewer lines, and even pumps (customer grinder pumps or WRC sewer system pumps).

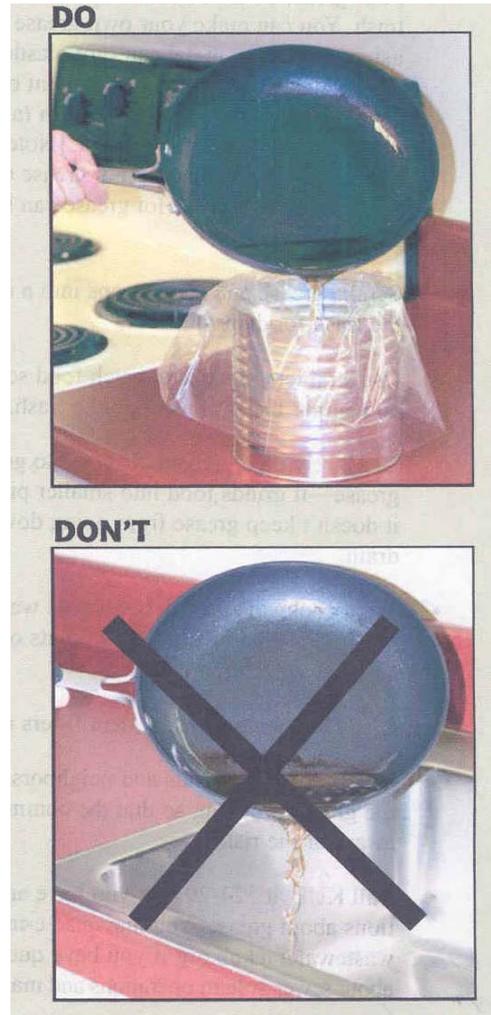
## Where is grease produced?

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

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

- Meat fats
- Lard
- Cooking oil
- Shortening
- Butter
- Food scraps
- Baking goods
- Sauces
- Dairy products
- Margarine

**The easiest way to prevent grease-related sewage overflows is to keep cooking grease out of the sewer system.**



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

## What problems are caused by grease?

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

## What Restaurant and Building Owners need to know about grease traps or interceptors

Restaurants, large buildings (such as apartment complexes) and other commercial establishments may have grease traps or interceptors that keep grease out of the sewer system. For a grease trap or interceptor to work correctly, it must be properly:

- Designed (sized and manufactured to handle the amount that is expected)
- Installed (level, vented, etc.)
- Maintained (cleaned and serviced on a frequent basis).

Solids should never be put into grease traps or interceptors. Routine, often daily, maintenance of grease traps and interceptors is needed to ensure that they properly reduce or prevent blockages.

Be cautious of chemicals and additives (including soaps and detergents) that claim to dissolve grease. Some of these additives simply pass grease down pipes where it can clog the sewer lines in another area.

## How homeowners can help protect their plumbing and our environment:

- Never pour grease down sinks, toilets, or any drains.
- Scrape grease and food scraps into a can or the trash for disposal.
- **Please use caution when pouring hot grease or wait for it to cool slightly. Hot grease can burn skin.**
- 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 or scrape cookware and dishes well before washing. Commercial additives in detergents only dissolve grease temporarily.
- Clean kitchen exhaust system filters routinely.
- Talk with your friends and neighbors about the grease problem, so that the community is aware of the risk.
- Call WRC at: 248-858-1128 with any questions about grease, or sewer system operations and maintenance.
- Call WRC at: 248-858-1040 with any questions about commercial grease trap installation and maintenance.

## What can you do?

Can your grease. Dispose of grease in a way that is good for your plumbing.

A metal coffee can with a plastic lid or empty metal soup or vegetable cans make great grease cans. Line your can with disposable heat-resistant oven bags. Throw the liners away (after grease cools) and reuse the can.

Avoid costly repairs. Following these guidelines will help avoid costly plumbing repairs associated with clogged pipes, drains or other plumbing and avoid potential fines, penalties or invoices for damage to sewer system laterals or pumps.

## Safety Tip

If you have a grease-related sewer backup, avoid direct contact or wash thoroughly with soap and water. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says skin contact isn't a serious health risk, but swallowing bacteria or a virus may cause illness. 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.

For more information, see [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/sanitation.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/sanitation.asp).

# CAN YOUR GREASE!

Protect your plumbing



and the environment

