



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2020

Contact: Katherine Hoyer
208-415-5108

Take Care of those Pipes

By Katherine Hoyer

With many of us being home more than we previously were, you may find yourself using one particular area of your home more, your bathroom. Frequent usage may be giving your toilet a workout these days, but the demand for plumbers is for a different reason. With toilet paper sometimes being hard to find and everyone doing their due diligence in cleaning and sanitizing you may be tempted to toss that paper towel or sanitizing wipe down the toilet. Please don't.

Even "flushable wipes" are posing a problem in the pipes. According to the City of Coeur d'Alene Wastewater Department after putting a flushable wipe in water for over 30 minutes and giving it several aggressive agitations, the wipe did not even begin to break down.

The City of Coeur d'Alene posted on their Wastewater Department webpage:

A What Not To Flush Guideline

While using paper towels, "flushable wipes," and Kleenex during a state of emergency sounds like a good idea, please remember that these products are still garbage and should be treated as such. These items have a high probability of clogging your drain line resulting in a call to a plumber that could be avoided. Please keep a garbage can by your toilet should you need to utilize one of the alternative products.

They began a test to show how different paper products break down in water. You can view those images on their webpage.

Personal wipes such as baby wipes or facial tissues are often coated with different substances than toilet paper and are not safe for the septic system. They accumulate in pipes and can end up backing up your drain, leading to sewage in your home.

Repairing these problems can be very expensive. Follow these tips to protect your pipes.

- **Only flush toilet paper down the drain.**
- **Do not flush cleaning wipes, baby wipes, facial tissues, paper towels, or any other types of paper products.**
- **Even “flushable” wipes should not be placed in your toilet. Instead throw them in the trash.**
- **Be conscientious of your water usage.**
 - Turn off the water while brushing teeth, shaving, or while you are lathering your hands when washing for at least 20 seconds.
 - Wash full loads of laundry.
 - Fill the dishwasher completely before starting.
 - Remember to turn off your sprinklers if there is rain in the forecast.
 - Check and repair any leaks.

According to the EPA, each American uses an average of 88 gallons of water a day at home. We encourage everyone to continue cleaning, sanitizing, and washing their hands often. Just don't flush those cleaning wipes down the toilet and save a little water by turning off the faucet.

Kootenai Health and the Panhandle Health District are actively working to share information about COVID-19 with our community. You can find the latest updates and ways to protect yourself at [cdc.gov/covid19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19). If you have questions about COVID-19 or think you may have the virus, call the Panhandle Health District COVID-19 hotline at 1-877-415-5225.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

###