Get to know the Unflushables.

Pollution prevention begins at home.

There's no way around it – we live in a disposable society. From disposable plates, forks and napkins to disposable diapers, feminine hygiene products, and cleaning supplies, we use and throw away literally tons of things each year.

Unfortunately, many of us are misled by product labels and ad campaigns that say products sold as "disposable" are also "flushable." We're here to tell you they're not. Nothing should ever be flushed down the toilet except, well, the "unmentionables."

The fact is, your toilet and the sewer line it's connected to was specifically designed for toilet paper and human waste. That's it. Anything bigger, thicker, longer, stringier, stiffer, less water soluble, more fibrous can clog pipes, catch on tree roots in the line, or get caught in the pumps that move wastewater from your home to the wastewater treatment facility.

The City spends thousands of dollars each year removing debris from pipes and unclogging pumps, and the introduction of these "flushable" products has only made it more challenging. You can help keep utility rates low by remembering one simple rule: If it's not toilet paper… don't flush it.

"Unflushable" vs. "Flushable"

The following products are often mistakenly flushed down the toilet or otherwise put into the sewer system, resulting in clogged pipes, broken pumps and Sanitary Sewer Overflows:

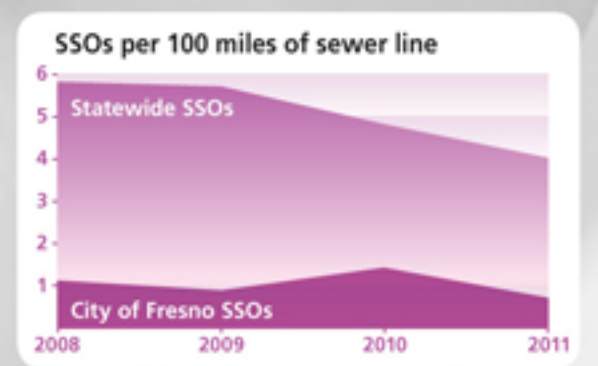
- Disposable Wipes
- Diapers
- Paper Towels
- Condoms
- Feminine Hygiene Products & Applicators
- Cat Litter
- Shop Towels or Rags
- Disposable Gloves
- Dental Floss
- Q-tips, Cotton Balls, Makeup Pads

Here's the entire list of products that may be flushed:

Toilet Paper

Low, Low, SSOs

What is an SSO? A Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) is any overflow, spill release, discharge, or diversion of untreated wastewater from a sanitary sewer system. The City has an approved Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP) which implements plans and procedures to eliminate SSOs.

Employees in Wastewater Management Division's Collection System Maintenance (CSM) workgroup maintain the City's sanitary sewer system and related infrastructures. Because much of the City's nearly 1,500 miles of sanitary sewer system is 50 to 100 years old, maintaining it can be quite a challenge.

The good news is that the hard work is paying off! Between preventative maintenance, best management practices, an increased awareness of Fats, Oils, and Grease disposal, and the use of new and improved sewer cleaning and inspection technologies, the average number of Sanitary Sewer Overflows in Fresno is small compared to the average number of statewide SSOs.