

## **Facilitator Notes Protect Your Pipes**

### **Activity Goal-**

Through this activity participants will be able to:

- briefly describe the process that water moves through as it is treated at a wastewater treatment plant.
- state that the water that goes down their drains eventually ends up back in a river.
- list three things that shouldn't go down their drains and the proper way to dispose of common household wastes.

### **Wastewater Introduction (5 min)**

- Ask the students if they know what happens to the water once it goes down their tub/sink drains, down their toilet.
- Take some answers then tell them that they're going to watch a short video that will explain the process that cleans the water after people use it.
- Show the "beyond the drain video"

### **Wastewater Discussion (5 minutes)**

- Using the wastewater poster explain the process that water moves through as it moves from homes and is treated.
  - Focus on the jobs of the people who run the plants as well as the bacteria that are an intricate part of the process
- Reiterate that once the water is treated it goes back into the river where it not only has to be safe for the animals and plants in the environment but that it may also become someone else's drinking water.

### **Protect Your Pipes (7 minutes)**

- Now that we've talked about what happens to the water after you use it, let's talk about why it's important for you to think about what you put down your sink/toilet drains.
- Hand or show students each item
- Then ask them to sort the item according to how they typically dispose of that item in their home "does this item go in the trash, recycling, compost, down the sink, down the toilet?"
- After they have placed their item give them any advice or tips to make their waste disposal more pipe and environmentally friendly. See the table below for information on how the items should be sorted
- Depending on amount of time can also do the Wipes vs TP activity

### **Discussion: (2 minutes)**

- Who can briefly explain the wastewater treatment process?
- Where does the water end up as it finishes up the treatment process?
- Why is it important for us to dispose to waste in our house in "pipe friendly way"?

<b>Household Items</b>	<b>Proper Disposal</b>
Wipes	trash- even if they say flushable they actually aren't and get stuck in machinery at pumping stations and at the WWTP and also can clump up and clog sewer mains a
Diaper	trash
Rubber Gloves	trash
Medicine (empty pill bottle represents medications)	trash- or take it to your local pharmacy or drug take back day - WWTP cannot take the compounds found in our medicines out of the water which can lead to them going back into our streams and rivers. Recycle the containers.
Q-tips	trash- these can get stuck in machinery at the pumping station, they don't get broken up in water so have to be physically picked out of the water at the treatment plant
<b>Food Items</b>	
Dressing	trash can- especially if getting rid of large amounts of condiments- the oils and fats act just like grease and can solidify in drain pipes.
Butter	trash can- especially if getting rid of large amounts - the oils and fats act just like grease and can solidify in drain pipes.
Milk/ice cream	trash can- especially if getting rid of large amounts - the oils and fats act just like grease and can solidify in drain pipes.
Oil	can the grease- oil left in the pan after cooking should be placed in a aluminum can and allowed to cool/solidify. Once the can is full throw it in the trash can and get a new can
Meats	trash can- meats, bones, etc. should never go down your sink drain.
Fruits and Veggies	compost- even if you have a garbage disposal keep these nutrients out of the waste water and instead put them back into your garden.
Canned Meat	trash can- the residue from canned pet food and other meats act just like other oils and after constantly putting them down your drain can lead to backups
Juice	sink
<b>What about using the garbage disposal or hot water?</b> Neither of these will keep grease from clogging your drains. If anything putting grease and other oily substances and meat in your garbage disposal will end up causing issues with your garbage disposal which could lead to costly plumbing fees.	
<b>Benefits of composting-</b> scraps from fruits and vegetables make an excellent fertilizer for your house plants/garden. Start a compost pile in your backyard or patio and never have to buy fertilizer again	
<p><b>Dealing with medications - Throwing Medication Away</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check pill bottle for any instructions on proper disposal. If none are present, proceed to the following steps.</li> <li>2. Remove medication from original containers. Do not crush tablets or capsules.</li> <li>3. Mix medication with undesirable substance like kitty litter or used coffee grounds. The drugs will be less appealing to children and pets, and obfuscate the medicines that some people may seek by going through the trash.</li> <li>4. Place mixture in a sealable, secure bag, can, or container.</li> <li>5. Throw away sealed container and contents into garbage.</li> <li>6. Scratch off all personal identifying information on the prescription label so that it is unreadable before recycling pill bottle or medicine container.</li> </ol> <p>It is important not to give away unwanted medications to friends as doctors prescribe medicine based on a patient's unique set of symptoms and pertinent medical history. A medication that works for you might be lethal to somebody else!</p> <p>If you have additional questions about disposing of your medicine, please contact the US Food and Drug Administration at 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332).</p>	