



**For Immediate Release:**  
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### **LDEQ encourages citizens to flush only toilet paper**

**BATON ROUGE** – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) encourages everyone to flush only toilet paper into their sewage or septic systems. Baby wipes, disinfecting wipes, paper napkins and other non-flushable items should be placed in the trash. Wipes labeled “flushable” or “disposable” should also be placed directly into the trash, as flushing those items can ultimately create sewage problems.

As many continue to work from home, the stresses on residential sewage and septic systems are expected to see an increase in the coming months. Flushing only toilet paper helps ensure that our wastewater management systems continue normal operations.

A press release issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week noted that preventable toilet and sewer backups could pose a threat to human health and present an extra challenge to our water utilities and their workforce. Flushing anything other than toilet paper can damage internal plumbing, local sewer systems and septic systems. Fixing these backups is costly and takes time and resources away from ensuring that wastewater management systems are otherwise working properly.

While LDEQ encourages the continued disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, it’s important to dispose of any disinfecting wipes and other paper items into the trash -- not the toilet. Again, that includes wipes marked as “flushable” or “disposable.”

Those who flush anything other than toilet paper can be contributing to the damage of their system without even knowing it. Flushing wipes, paper towels, disposable and non-disposable wipes and other non-flushable items can create what’s known as a “fatberg,” or a congealed mass that forms in a sewer system due to the combination of flushed non-biodegradable solid matter, such as wet wipes, grease and cooking fat.

According to a segment last year on NBC’s Today Show, people often flush both “disposable” and “non-disposable” disinfectant wipes – both of which can cause issues down the line. So-called “flushable” wipes can create fatbergs, which can potentially clog the sewage line and ultimately disrupt pump equipment.

In recent years, wastewater treatment officials around the country have been advising people to stop flushing any type of wet wipe, even if manufacturers say it’s safe. So, regardless of what the label says, toss all baby wipes and disinfectant wipes directly into your trash can.

To view EPA’s press release, go to <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-encourages-americans-only-flush-toilet-paper>.

For more information on COVID-19 and what steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones, please visit <https://www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/covid19>.