

Ripple Effect #5

Don't Use the Sewer as a Garbage Can

What goes into the sewer through toilets, sinks or storm drains can end up in our rivers. The following tips are from the Winnipeg Water and Waste Department.

In your home or where you work

Don't put items such as these down the drain—put them in the garbage where they belong.

- Cigarette butts
- Dental floss
- Rags
- Disposable diapers
- Human and pet hair
- Cotton swabs
- Cosmetics
- Food scraps (or compost them or dig them into your garden)
- Vegetable and animal grease, fats, oils (they can clog the sewer in your home and your city's system and cause sewer backup:

In your yard and on the street

Anything on the ground can wash into the storm drains on streets and end up in the rivers. Please:

- Clean up your pet waste.
- Check your vehicle regularly to make sure harmful fluids, such as oil, antifreeze and gasoline, aren't leaking.
- Don't litter.
- Don't put grass clippings, leaves and other yard waste on the streets—not only do they add harmful chemicals and nutrients to the rivers and clog storm drains, it may be against the law in your city.

Chemicals don't belong in the garbage or the sewer—they need special handling

Don't dump chemicals down the drain. Wastewater treatment plants may not be able to remove them and they can end up in the river, harming fish and other aquatic life.

Dumping chemicals down the drain may also damage the sewer in your home and your city's system.

Leftover or expired prescription drugs/over-the-counter medicines

Take them to a pharmacy where they will be disposed of safely.

Household hazardous waste products

Please dispose of household hazardous waste products safely by taking them to a free hazardous waste collection center. Call your city or county for their location and hours of operation. Many products contain symbols or warnings indicating they are hazardous waste products—corrosive, explosive, flammable or poison.

Common hazardous wastes include:

- Paint brush cleaners/solvents
- Chemical lawn fertilizers

- Gasoline
- Leftover paint
- Antifreeze (radiator/windshield)
- Cleaners (toilet, oven, drain)
- Weed or insect killer
- Swimming pool chemicals
- Used oil products.

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)

The RRBC is a grassroots organization that is a chartered not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota law. Our offices in Moorhead, MN and Winnipeg, MB can be reached at 218-291-0422 and 204-982-7254, or you can check out our website at www.redriverbasincommission.org.