

# WATERWORKS

**Provided as a public service for our customers and neighbors**

## **Surprising Foods You Shouldn't Put Down Your Drain**

Many people know that they shouldn't put bacon grease down the drain. But did you know that there are many other foods, like salad dressing, that can also cause serious plumbing problems?

### **What's the Problem With Putting Foods Down the Drain?**



When certain foods are allowed to go down the drain, they can accumulate inside sewer pipes, becoming a public health issue, harming the environment, and increasing wastewater treatment costs.

As these foods build up, they restrict the flow in pipes and can cause untreated wastewater to back up into homes and businesses, resulting in high costs for cleanup and restoration.

Manholes can overflow in our neighborhoods and contaminate local waters, including drinking water. Exposure to untreated wastewater is a public-health hazard.

Communities spend billions of dollars every year unclogging or replacing grease-blocked pipes, repairing pump stations, and cleaning up costly and illegal wastewater spills. Excessive food, fats, oils, and grease in the sewer system can affect local wastewater rates. So, keeping food waste out of the sewer system helps everyone.

### **Ten Types of Foods You Shouldn't Put Down the Drain**

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1. salad dressing—and similar products
2. sour cream—and similar products
3. gravy—and similar products
4. cooking oil
5. shortening
6. lard
7. butter
8. margarine
9. sauces
10. meat fats in food scraps

### What Should You Do to Prevent Problems?



**Cooking Oil:** Find a place to recycle it, if possible. Or dispose of it by pouring it into a sealable container and putting it in the trash. If you have a lot of oil to dispose of, you can also mix clay cat litter into the oil, a little at a time, then pour the litter into a trash bag. Seal the bag and put it in your trash.



**Food scraps:** You can compost any vegetable or fruit scraps that don't have meat, bones, fish, dairy products, grease, or oil. Check out this video on composting to learn more. Other food scraps should be scraped into the trash. Place a catch basket in the sink to catch scraps and throw them in the trash. Don't use a garbage disposal. Greasy and non-greasy food scraps can still clog your pipes.



**Dirty dishes:** Wipe greasy dishes with dry paper towels before washing them, then throw away the paper towels. Don't use cloth towels or rags to wipe greasy or oily dishware. When you wash the cloths, the grease will end up in the sewer. If you need to rinse dishes, use cold water.

# Water Quality Resources

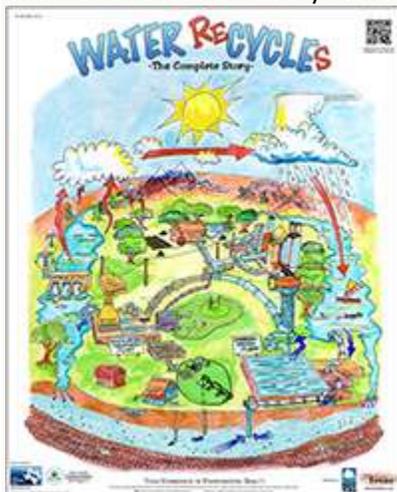
## Successes

- Over 4,900 monitors that measure water quality are deployed throughout Texas.
- Over 7,500 acres of coastal habitat and 13,500 linear feet of habitat in Galveston Bay have been created, protected, restored, and/or enhanced.
- More than 2,000 stream miles, 27,000 reservoir acres, and 200 estuary square miles are being restored by stakeholders across Texas.
- Buck Creek was able to be removed from a federal list of impaired water bodies after a collaboration of governmental agencies and local landowners decreased bacterial contamination and improved water quality in the watershed.
- Good grazing management in West and North Texas increases grass health and subsequently the amount of water that the soil can hold – decreasing runoff.

## Publications

### Water Recycles: The Complete Story

Check out how our water cycle works!



You can order this free publication and more through the TCEQ Publications page.

## Plans for Managing Rivers, Lakes, and Estuaries

- Continuing Planning Process

- [Surface Water Quality Standards](#)
- [Watershed Action Planning](#)
- [Water Quality Management Plan](#)

### Monitoring and Assessment

- [Texas Integrated Report of Surface Water Quality](#)
- [Clean Rivers Program](#)
- [Managing Water Quality Data](#)
- [Surface Water Quality Monitoring](#)
- [Hydrography Maps and Data](#)

### Planning and Implementation

- [Nonpoint Source Program](#)
- [Surface Water Quality Standards](#)
- [Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\) Program](#)
- [Galveston Bay Estuary Program](#)
- [Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program](#)

### Other Programs

- [Don't Mess with Texas Water](#)
- [Texas Stream Team](#)
- [Clean Texas Marinas](#)
- [USGS Texas Water Science Center](#)

### Related Pages

- [Water Conservation Tips](#)
- [Water Conservation Successes and Resources](#)
- [Water Quality Tips](#)
- [Water Quality Successes and Resources](#)

## **Water Conservation Tips**

Although Texas has recovered from the severe drought of the past few years, conservation is the easiest way to ensure that the state has enough water for future growth. In fact, water conservation is an essential part of the State Water Plan. We encourage all Texans to cut back on water use.

### **Do Your Part to Conserve Water**

1. Water your yard thoroughly, but only as needed—usually no more than one inch, once a week.
2. Use drip irrigation for plants and gardens, and water early in the morning to minimize evaporation.
3. Collecting rainwater for landscape use is great for the plants and can save you water and money. Install aerators to cut in half the amount of water used by each faucet.
4. Fix faucet leaks, which can waste up to 3,000 gallons of water a year.
5. Install a water-efficient showerhead. It can save the average family 2,900 gallons of water and \$70 in energy and water costs a year.
6. Check your toilet by using a leak-detection dye tablet. Leaks can waste up to 200 gallons of water a day.
7. Replace older toilets with the most water-efficient models and save up to 13,000 gallons of water a year.
8. Washing only full loads of laundry can save an average household more than 3,400 gallons of water each year.
9. Invest in an ENERGY STAR-qualified clothes washer, which typically uses about 50% less water and 25% less energy per load.

(TCEQ <http://takecareoftexas.org/water/water-conservation>)