



THE DAMAGE WE'RE DOING TO OUR SEWERS, SEAS AND OCEANS

THE EVIDENCE

The war on plastics highlights just how much the British public cares about our environment and has led to rapid changes in the law, such as the ban on single-use carrier bags. But what about the plastic that we CANNOT see? And what about the damage we are causing beneath our feet in our sewers and drains? Did you know we are hurting the environment by constantly bombarding it with 'hidden' plastics, foreign objects and substances flushed down toilets or washed down sinks? This causes costly blockages, creates monster fatbergs and pollutes our waterways, with devastating implications for marine life. Here is the evidence...

FATS, OIL AND GREASE (FOG)

FOG

Fats, oils and grease, which congeal and solidify after they are poured down the drain, combining with products like wet wipes and sanitary products to form **FATBERGS**

70%
Estimated amount of FOG in an average fatberg

250 METRES | 130 TONNES
The size and weight of one of the biggest fatbergs we have ever unearthed, now on display at the Museum of London

61%
of people have heard of the term 'fatberg'

1 DJ Greg James broadcast a live show from the site of a London fatberg

47% of people admit to pouring cooking fat or oil down the sink

1 BILLION people had the chance to see the story about the Whitechapel fatberg

400-600 The number of fatbergs we tackle every month

HIDDEN PLASTICS

8 MILLION TONNES
of plastic is dumped in the ocean every year

14 MILLION VIEWERS
tuned in to the first episode of the BBC's Blue Planet II, making it the most watched TV show of 2017, sparking a global debate about plastics in our oceans

TAMPONS, SANITARY TOWELS & PANTYLINERS

91% of people agree that we must raise awareness about not flushing sanitary products

85% of people know they should not flush sanitary products

85% of people know that sanitary products should be disposed of in a bin rather than down the toilet

39% of women have flushed either a sanitary towel, panty liner or tampon down the toilet in their lifetime

20 MILLION WOMEN admit to flushing sanitary products

200,000 TONNES Tampons, pads and panty liners amount to more than 200,000 tonnes of waste per year

DISPOSABLE WIPES

5,000 Record number of wet wipes washed up on a 116 square metre stretch of the Thames shore, collected by Thames21

In 2018 the Government announced plans to ban the sale of all disposable wipes within the next 25 years

25 YEARS

41% of people in favour of a government ban say "Wipes are part of a 'disposable culture' that is bad for the environment"

93% of material in sewer blockages is made up of wet wipes, according to Water UK, costing **£100 million** every year to clear

750 PACKS The equivalent number of wet wipes that were removed from a single pumping station over a **6 month period** by Northumbrian Water

59% would not support a government ban on the sale of all disposable wipes

31% of people have flushed a wet wipe down the toilet

OTHER CULPRITS

8 MILLION nappies are thrown away in the UK every year

10% OF MEN admit to flushing a condom in the past year

80% of men know that condoms should be disposed of in the bin

100,000 cotton buds are flushed through the sewers every week, says Thames Water

POLYPROPYLENE The type of plastic cotton buds are made from, which floats to the surface of sewerage treatment plants and can enter waterways

100,000 microbeads are thought to go down the drain and into the ocean from just one shower, according to the cross-party Environmental Audit Committee

680 TONNES of microbeads are estimated to be used in cosmetic products every year

2018 A ban on the sale of products containing microbeads came into force in the UK in June 2018

500 YEARS The estimated length of time it takes before nappies begin to break down

CHANGING HABITS



~~Flushable~~
Manufacturers **MUST** change packaging on disposable wipes to reflect that **NO** wipe is flushable

3Ps
Remember the 3 Ps: **PEE**, **POO** and **PAPER** are the only items that should ever be flushed down the toilet

#BinIt

Tampons, sanitary towels and pantyliners packaging must state that **NO** product should be flushed down the toilet

#BinTheWipe

Remember that wipes do not disintegrate in the same way as toilet paper. They should always be placed in the bin, no matter what the packaging says



Eco-Friendly

Alternatives are increasingly available: consider biodegradable wet wipes, plastic-free sanitary products and reusable nappies

#FatbergFighters

Educate yourself and your family on how best to prevent fatbergs from forming by using our Fatberg Fighters resources



SOURCES

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