

How to Avoid Getting a Blocked Drain

Clogged drains are smelly, messy and can cause serious plumbing problems if left untreated. Learn how to avoid them and how to spot the warning signs.

Using a hair catcher and cleaning your drain stoppers periodically is one of the best ways to prevent clogged drains. Also, never flush nappies, baby wipes or sanitary items down toilets.

1. Don't Pour Grease Down the Drain

Grease and cooking oil are a big contributor to [drain clogs](#), as they solidify into clumps that block the entire pipe. It is always best to not pour these substances down your sink, as they can damage your pipes and cause unpleasant odors and slow drainage.

Many people try to use dish soap or hot water to flush the grease from their drains, but this can be a harmful solution for your pipes. Dish soap is not strong enough to dissolve grease, and hot water can actually push the clump further into your sewer or septic system. Instead, use a strainer to catch any food scraps and transfer them

to your trash bin. Then, pour a little bit of baking soda and vinegar down your drain to fizz it up and break down any remaining grease.

2. Don't Pour Oil Down the Drain

Drains get blocked due to a build-up of flushed waste and debris that's accumulated in one or more of your drains. This includes wipes that shouldn't be flushed, fatty oils and grease, hairs, cooking oil, food waste, and more.

Grease and oils look liquid in their warm state but can quickly cause problems for your drain pipes and sewer system. When poured down the drain, they cool, solidify, and coat the pipes.

Home cooks and restaurant kitchens alike can be hit with costly fines for discharging used cooking oil down the drain. Instead, pour any leftover cooking oil into a lidded jar and discard it with the trash. This will prevent it from causing blockages in your drain pipes and sewer line. If you need to dispose of a large amount, call your local waste disposal service.

3. Don't Pour Food Down the Drain

Putting any kind of food down the drain can cause blockages. Fats, oils, and grease (FOG) are the biggest culprits, especially if poured down a drain regularly. They will clog your pipes and can even make their way into sewers, creating pollution.

Pouring FOG down the drain will also cause your water to congeal and re-solidify, which will lead to a backup in your home's plumbing. You can keep a resealable container, such as an old pickle or tomato jar, to collect FOG and dispose of it in the trash.

Milk is another food that should not be poured down the drain, as it can cause a buildup of fats in your pipes and clog drains. You can put milk in the fridge for later,

or find a safe way to discard it.

4. Don't Pour Soda Down the Drain

It is best not to pour soda down the drain, as it is acidic and can erode pipes and cause clogs. It also attracts pests, such as ants and roaches, to your kitchen.

A better option for unclogging a drain is to use natural cleaners that can create a fizzing effect and break blockages apart. You can combine baking soda, vinegar and boiling water to clean your drains.

It is also a good idea to avoid putting any expandable food items down the drain, such as rice and pasta. These foods expand in water and can catch other items in your pipes. They should be disposed of in the trash instead.

5. Don't Pour Sewage Down the Drain

A clogged drain can be like the traffic jam of your home's plumbing system. If left unattended, it can cause extensive and expensive damage. So, it is best to avoid putting anything down the drain that isn't water or toilet paper.

Everything that goes down the drain leaks back into the environment, gets into our drinking water and affects the food we eat (along with plants and animals). Chemical products such as bleach, ammonia, chlorine should never be washed down the drain.

Eggshells, pasta, potato peelings, bones and coffee grounds should not be poured down the drain either as they can cause a blockage. These should be thrown in the trash instead. Likewise, cat litter labeled as "flushable" should not be washed down the drain either as it can clog sewer lines. For help with intense blockages, a [plumber in Geelong](#) has the experience and tools to unblock it correctly.