Play along and see if you know the answers to

Can You Flush This?
You can avoid expensive septic system repair costs by knowing what not to put down the drain.

**Killers**

Items that, when put down the drain, will kill off the important bacteria in your septic system and reduce its ability to break down organic waste.

**Cloggers**

Items that, when put down the drain, can clog sewer line from your house to your septic tank or the outlet filter, or leach field.
Can You Flush This?

Toilet paper?

(This one should be really easy.)
Mostly yes – but not all toilet paper is the same

- The packaging should indicate if the paper is septic safe.
- To test toilet paper, put a square of the paper in water and see how fast it comes apart. If it stays together, do not use that brand.
Can You Flush This?

Tissue?

You have run out of toilet paper, but there is a box of tissue on the back of the tank. It’s made of paper, so it must be okay, right?
Tissues are designed to contain gooey fluid messes coming from your nose. They will not break down well in your septic tank and will contribute to clogging the underground plumbing.
Can You Flush This?
Leftover or expired medication?
Dispose of expired or unused medication at designated collection sites.

Antibiotics are germ killers.
- Septic systems *need* germs (bacteria) to break down waste.

Some medicines are endocrine-disrupting chemicals
- Fish and amphibians with both male and female characteristics (intersex) are being found more commonly.

“For smallmouth bass, the rate of males showing female characteristics was a stunning 85 percent, according to the study by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The intersex rate for male largemouth bass tested was 27 percent on average.”

- From Monday, April 4, 2016 Hartford Courant article by Gregory B Hladky

The Putnam Police Department is a “no questions asked” drop off site.
Can You Flush This?

Diapers?

Let’s face it. There are things that go in diapers that belong in a toilet!
NO Diapers! Baby or adult types - both bad!

You can knock the solids out of the diaper into the toilet, then wrap the diaper inside its own water proof outer cover and dispose in the trash.
Can You Flush This?

Wet wipes?  Baby wipes?

This one should be easy. The package says right on it that they are flushable.
Absolutely Not!!!

All wet wipes should be disposed of in the trash.

This is what happens to wet wipes when they get to a sewage treatment plant. They clog the system there. They can clog the system at your home, too.
Can You Flush This?

Feminine Hygiene Products

• Tampons
• Tampon Applicators
• Sanitary Napkins
• Panty Liners
Feminine Hygiene Products are Cloggers and Non-biodegradable

All feminine hygiene products should be disposed of in the trash.

Did you ever find a “beach whistle”? Where do you think it came from?
Can You Flush This?

“Rubbers”
(you know what I mean)
Condoms are Commode Cloggers

The proper way to dispose of a condom is in the trash.
Can You Flush This?

Latex Paint

The paint can label says to use soap and water to clean paint brushes, rollers and paint trays.
Latex paint should **NOT** be disposed of down the drain. Latex is rubber.

- To dispose of leftover paint, recycle it, or leave the top off in a well ventilated area.
- When the paint is dried up, dispose of the paint can in the trash.
- Latex paint brushes, when washed into your septic system, will result in large rubber-like floating masses, clogging your system.
- Paint thinner and oil based paints should be disposed of at a hazardous waste collection site.
Can You Flush This?

Fats, Oils and Grease
Fats, Oils and Grease

- Hardened fats, oils and grease clogged a larger sewer pipe.

The drain is not a dump! Put fog in the trash.
Can You Flush This?

Flushable Kitty Litter

• The label says flushable.
• The clumps contain cat urine and feces.
Flushable Kitty Litter

- “Flushable” kitty litter, described as biodegradable, can be made of processed newsprint, corn cobs, or wheat by-products.
- All cat litter products add to the solid waste or floating scum layer of waste that adds to the septic system load.
- It is best to bag your pet waste and throw it in the trash.

Would you flush a newspaper down your toilet?
Can You Flush This?
Disposable Toilet Cleaning Brush Pads

I think we all agree that a dirty toilet bowl brush can harbor lots of germs. Finally, a disposable product to solve that problem. And the label says it is flushable.
Disposable Toilet Bowl Cleaning Brush Pads are another system clogger

If a product doesn’t break down quickly in water, it can potentially clog your system, or add to the cost of operating the sewage treatment plant where your “honey wagon” offloads your waste for treatment.

Surface breakout of a failed septic system (minus the bad smell)
Can You Flush This?

Cigarette butts
These Butts are Septic System Cloggers

95% of cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate (a plastic), and the balance are made from papers and rayon.

Toilets (and septic systems) are not made for butts like these.
Can You Flush This?

Kitchen Garbage Disposal

A garbage disposal is designed to chop up leftover food scraps into small pieces. Isn’t that like chewing?
Using a kitchen garbage disposal can impact your septic system.

• Garbage disposals are not a good thing to have along with a septic system. Chopped up food particles from the garbage disposal make their way into the tank and do not completely biodegrade before they can get out into your leach field lines. These lines can then become clogged with food and cause a back-up.

• If you do use a kitchen garbage disposal, it is recommended that you have your system pumped out more frequently.
Here is the bottom line...

• The best thing to do for your septic system is to not flush anything down your toilet other than human waste and toilet paper (preferably 1 ply toilet paper).

• Avoid washing food scraps, coffee grounds, fats, oils and grease down the kitchen drain. These items can clog your system.

• Do not put solvents, medications, plastic or latex paint, or pesticides down your drains.

• Hair, feminine hygiene products, condoms, dental floss, tissues, paper towels and so-called “flushable” wipes are septic system cloggers and should not be put down your drains.
Thank you for playing “Can You Flush This?”

“Can You Flush This?” is part of an education and outreach program brought to you by the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District. The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District is a non-profit soil and water conservation organization created by State Statute. This program is part of a Mashamoquet Brook Septic Tank Upgrades Project, funded in part by a US EPA Clean Water Act § 319 grant through the CT DEEP.