

# Do Your Part, Be SepticSmart: The Do's and Don'ts of Your Septic System

Learn these simple steps to protect your home, health, environment and property value:



## Protect It and Inspect It:

### Do:

- Have your system inspected (in general) every three years by a licensed contractor and have the tank pumped, when necessary, generally every three to five years.

## Think at the Sink:

### Don't:

- Pour cooking grease or oil down the sink or toilet.
- Rinse coffee grounds into the sink.
- Pour household chemicals down the sink or flush them.

### Do:

- Eliminate or limit the use of a garbage disposal.
- Properly dispose of coffee grounds & food.
- Put grease in a container to harden before discarding in the trash.

## Don't Overload the Commode:

### Don't:

- Flush non-degradable products or chemicals, such as feminine hygiene products, condoms, dental floss, diapers, cigarette butts, cat litter, paper towels, pharmaceuticals.

### Do:

- Dispose of these items in the trash can!

## Shield Your Field:

### Don't:

- Park or drive on your drainfield. The weight can damage the drain lines.
- Plant trees or shrubs too close to your drainfield, roots can grow into your system and clog it.

### Do:

- Consult a septic service professional to advise you of the proper distance for planting trees and shrubs, depending on your septic tank location.

## Don't Strain Your Drain:

### Don't

- Concentrate your water use by using your dishwasher, shower, washing machine, and toilet at the same time. All that extra water can really strain your septic system.

### Do:

- Stagger the use of water-generating appliances. This can be helpful especially if your system has not been pumped in a long time.
- Become more **water efficient** by fixing plumbing leaks and consider installing bathroom and kitchen faucet aerators and water-efficient products.

For more SepticSmart tips, visit: [www.epa.gov/septicmart](http://www.epa.gov/septicmart)