



What you need to know about your septic system

The average life of a septic system is 25 to 40 years. By following these tips you will extend the life of your system.

1. Pump your system every 2 to 5 years depending on use. The more water you use and the more solids you put in the system the more often you need to pump it out.
2. If you use a garbage disposal pump your tank every year. Better yet, compost your kitchen scraps and do not put them down the drain.
3. Keep kitchen grease out of your septic system. It is not broken down easily and can clog your leaching field leading to expensive repairs.
4. Space out laundry loads over the course of the week and wash only full loads. The average load of laundry uses 47 gallons of water. One load per day rather than 7 loads on Saturday makes a big difference to your septic system.
5. Use liquid laundry detergents. Powdered detergents use clay as a “carrier” and can plug up a leaching field. The newer low suds “He” liquid detergents are best.
6. Install low flow water fixtures. By installing low water usage showerheads, toilets, dishwashers and washing machines an average family can save thousands of gallons of water a year.
7. Fix plumbing leaks promptly. A leaking toilet or faucet can add hundreds of gallons of excess water to your system.
8. Never discharge water softener backwash into your septic tank. The salt will eat away at the concrete over time and can cause an expensive system failure. Softener backwash should discharge to a separate, plastic leaching gallery.
9. Minimize the amount of chemicals, including harsh household cleaners and bleach, entering the system. Also minimize the amount of paint or stain you wash into the system as this can clog your system. Never pour grease or oil down the drain. Remember that chemicals you put down the drain will leach into the groundwater and can cause pollution. This is of special concern if you or your neighbors have a well.
10. Do not put special additives into your septic system. It doesn't matter what the advertisements say, these are not good for your system.

Additional information can be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/septic/how-care-your-septic-system>

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