



SEA TURTLES HAVE MORE FUN IN THE DARK... REDUCED LIGHTING SAVES SEA TURTLES

St. Lucie County's Sea Turtle Nesting Season is March 1 - November 15th. Nests are being laid and hatchlings are emerging and heading to the Atlantic Ocean along our 21 miles of beaches. Three species of marine turtles that nest here annually - green, loggerhead and leatherback - are listed as endangered or threatened species.

What You Can Do to Help:

- **Turn Off the Lights** - Turn off any light sources (from buildings or flashlights) that are directly visible from the beach or seaward of the primary dune between sunset and sunrise.
- **Put Your Stuff Away** - Remove all unattended beach furniture and other items from the beach at night. Marine turtle adults and hatchlings have died from entanglement in beach furniture.
- **Tear Down the Sandcastles & Fill in the Holes** - Sandcastles are fun to build, but can become deadly traps for marine turtle hatchlings. Be sure to tear them down and fill in any holes before leaving the beach.
- **Mind Your Pets** - Be aware of pet restrictions on the beaches you visit. Don't let your pets dig up sea turtle nests.
- **Leave Them Be** - Please do not handle marine turtles, their hatchlings or their eggs. Disturbing marine turtles or their nests is a violation of State and Federal laws and carries criminal penalties.

To report marine turtle nest poaching, hatchling disorientations, harassment or dead marine turtles, please call the Florida Fish and Wildlife hotline at 1-888-404-FWCC.

For more information on sea turtle friendly beaches, visit

<http://stlucie.ifas.ufl.edu>

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What NOT to Flush Down the Toilet

To help you save embarrassment, thousands of dollars in expensive plumbing repairs, and avoid polluting the environment, pay attention to this list of things that you must never, EVER, flush down the toilet:

1. Feminine Products

Tampons and other feminine hygiene products are not supposed to be flushed down the toilet.

2. Cooking Grease/Food

Grease should never be poured down any drain, period. It may look like a liquid that can easily be dumped down a drain, but when it cools, it will congeal and clog up your pipes. Collect your grease in a glass jar and throw it in the trash, or save the grease and reuse it, especially bacon grease...mmmm.

3. Baby Wipes/Wet Wipes/Cleaning Pads

These "adult baby wipes" are becoming increasingly popular nowadays. They are also increasingly causing clogs and backups in sewage pipes across the country. Although some of these brands might say they are flushable on the box, there are groups that are revising the guidelines, so soon all wet wipes will have a noticeable DO NOT FLUSH symbol on the packaging. If you must use these, throw them away in the trash can. Keep one close to the toilet. Flushing wet wipes can easily turn into an expensive mistake when you have to call a plumber to snake your toilet.

4. Dental Floss

Floss is not biodegradable and can cause serious clogs and environmental damage.

5. Q-tips/Cotton Balls

You might think that cotton will break down, since some toilet paper is made from cotton linen, but they don't! They will clump together, causing stoppages at bends in the pipes.

6. Diapers

Just because there is human waste inside does not mean that they are OK to flush. Diapers are made to expand in water. In the unlikely case you actually get the diaper to flush, it will likely get caught in the U-bend of the pipe.

7. Pills

You may think it is a good idea to put pills out of harm's way, but you are probably doing more harm than good by flushing them. They have toxic effects on groundwater supplies and wildlife. There are many community-based "take back your meds programs."

8. Paper Towels/Tissues

If you really want to save money and help the environment, you will use washable cloths and rags, but if you have to use paper towels, throw them in the trash, not the toilet. Tissues and paper towels are not made to dissolve like toilet paper; throw them in the trash.

What does that leave? Not much! Human excrement and regular toilet paper are the only things you should flush down your toilet.

Even the very thick and plush toilet paper can sometimes be very hard to break down. A courtesy flush is sometimes necessary to avoid clogging the drain.

Don't think that you are saving water or money by stuffing as much waste into the toilet before you actually flush. Having a plumber drive to your house to fix an expensive repair is much worse, for your wallet and the environment. Single-ply toilet, 100% recycled paper, is best.

Despite all the precautions you take, you may still experience plumbing problems. Things just happen sometimes.