

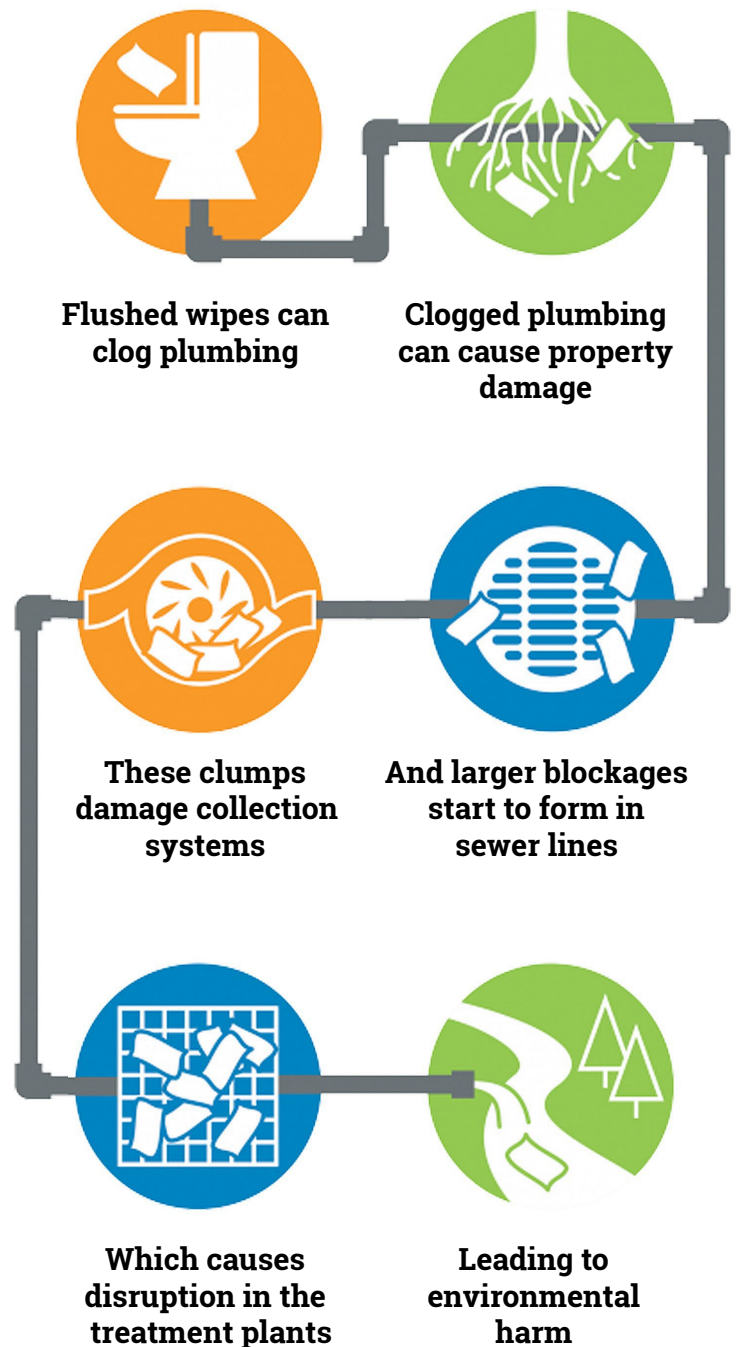
The Problem with “Flushable” Wipes

Single-use wet wipes – baby, disinfectant, disposable – are ubiquitous in our society. Right now, people are using wet wipes in record numbers because of sanitation concerns and toilet paper shortages due to the COVID-19 crisis.

One of the major issues with wipes is that many of these products are marketed as flushable, but are not compatible with sewer systems and infrastructure. Wipes have synthetic fibers made from cellulose that do not break down after being flushed and can catch on tree roots and accumulate with fats, oils, and grease and become large obstructions in the pipes. Further down the line, they weave together and create giant rags which get stuck in pumps, collection systems, and motors, causing backups and equipment failures. Clogs can also be environmentally destructive if they spill out onto beaches or waterways. Wastewater treatment facilities and sanitation services are already reporting increased issues with clogged sewers and sewer management collection systems due to COVID-19.

What you can do

The State Water Board reminds people not to flush any wipes or paper towels as usage increases due to COVID-19. You can help raise awareness of the issue by reminding your community on social media and other venues of the danger flushing any wipes poses to our sewage system and environment.



Adapted from casaweb.org/wipes/