

## Signs of septic failure

If you notice any of these signs, you need to get your septic system serviced right away:

- Sewage is surfacing on the ground over the drainfield or septic tank.
- There is a strong sewage odor.
- Bright green, spongy grass appearing on the drainfield.
- Sewage is backing up into the house
- Fixtures inside the house are draining slowly or gurgling.

## Your system's lifespan

The average lifespan of a septic system is 15 to 40 years, but it can last even longer if properly maintained. Preventative maintenance and being SepticSmart will go a long way towards extending the life of your system.

## Maintenance and costs

Your home's septic system should be inspected every three to five years for routine maintenance, and pumped as necessary depending on the inspection's results. Maintenance typically costs from \$250 to \$500, and is much more affordable than the cost of repairing or replacing a septic system, which could cost you thousands of dollars.

## Resources for homeowners

EPA's SepticSmart Program

[www.epa.gov/septicmart](http://www.epa.gov/septicmart)

City of Bothell Surface Water

[www.bothellwa.gov/septic](http://www.bothellwa.gov/septic)

King County

[www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/environmental-health.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/environmental-health.aspx)

Snohomish County

[snohomishcountywa.gov/2591/LakeWise-Septic-Systems](http://snohomishcountywa.gov/2591/LakeWise-Septic-Systems)

## Contact us



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# CARING FOR YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

...and avoiding  
costly repairs!

A helpful guide for homeowners



Courtesy of City of Bothell

# FIVE SIMPLE WAYS TO BE SEPTICSMART! Steps to protect your home, health, environment, and property value.

## Protect it and inspect it

### DO:

- Have your system inspected every three years by a licensed contractor and have the tank pumped, when necessary, about every three to five years.

## Think at the sink

Certain household items can either clog your system or kill the microbes that treat your wastewater.

### DON'T:

- Pour cooking grease or oil down the sink or toilet.
- Rinse coffee grounds into the sink.
- Pour household chemicals, gas, oil, pesticides, antifreeze, or paint down the sink or toilet.

### DO:

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

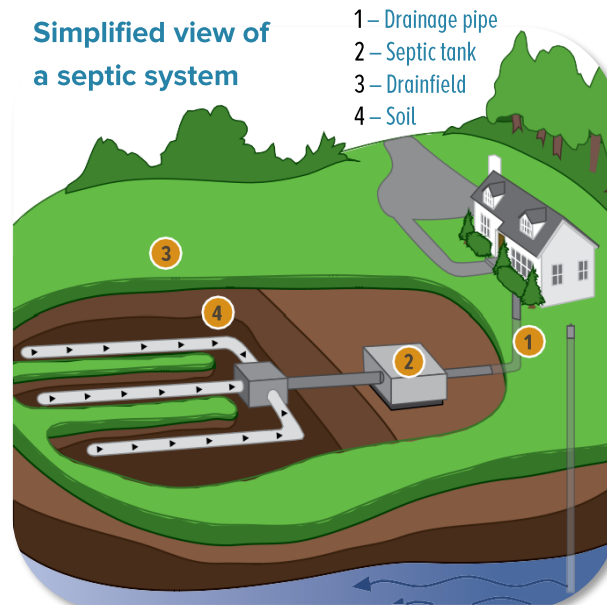
## Shield your field

### 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 overload the commode

### DON'T:

- Flush non-degradable products or chemicals, like feminine hygiene products, condoms, dental floss, diapers, cigarette butts, cat litter, paper towels, pharmaceuticals, or baby wipes (including “flushable” wipes).

### DO:

- Dispose of these items in the trash can.

## 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 your use of water-generating appliances. This can be helpful especially if your system hasn't 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.