



Care and Maintenance of your Septic System By Rolfe Garrett, Robyn's Septic Service

Owning a home with a septic system or **onsite wastewater treatment system** can be a mystery to most homeowners. The prevailing thought is *if it ain't broke, it must be ok*. However, that approach can lead to major problems, major repairs, and major expense. With just a little care and regular maintenance, you can get the most out of your system with moderate expense.

The first part of maintaining a healthy onsite system is keeping inorganic debris and undesirable waste out of the septic tank. Materials such as paper towels, personal protection items, feminine products, and especially wipes, (baby wipes, toilet cleaning pads, etc...) should never be flushed into the system. These items do not dissolve easily, if at all, and some are virtually indestructible. These items will accumulate and take up valuable treatment space in the septic tank, restricting treatment and possibly creating blockages and system failures with backups into the home. In addition, you should take care to prevent fats, oils, and greases, (FOG) from entering your system. These materials, including cooking waste, raw meats and, garbage disposal waste can lead to pipe clogging and system failure as well.

Disposal of all of these materials should be directed to your household waste stream and some may even be composted.

The second part of the process is a routine cleaning of the septic tank. Contrary to some folklore the septic tank does need to be cleaned periodically to remove the accumulation of solids and scum that the tank is designed to process. There are no chemicals or treatments that replace a normal septic tank cleaning. Period. Tanks should be cleaned, as a rule, every 2-3 years depending on use and the age of the system. Your service provider can recommend a time frame that is right for you.

Finally, a walk around your system is the best practice to observe problems, wet spots, or weed patches in the yard can be a sign of problems. Is the tank overfull, do the toilets flush normally? Watch for signs of concern and call your local professional for answers.

Rolfe Garrett from Robyn's Septic is Maryland's only NSF Accredited Onsite System Inspector and can be reached at 410-838-9845.

Visit our website for more information www.robynsseptic.com