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EPA Encourages Americans to Only Flush Toilet Paper

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Contact Information:

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WASHINGTON (March 30, 2020) — Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is encouraging all Americans to only flush toilet paper, not disinfecting wipes or other non-flushable items that should be disposed of in the trash. Flushing only toilet paper helps ensure that the toilets, plumbing, sewer systems and septic systems will continue working properly to safely manage our nation's wastewater. While EPA encourages disinfecting your environment to prevent the spread of COVID-19, never flush disinfecting wipes or other non-flushable items. These easy steps will keep surfaces disinfected and wastewater management systems working for all Americans.

Preventable toilet and sewer backups can pose a threat to human health and present an extra challenge to our water utilities and their workforce. Flushing anything other than toilet paper, including disinfecting wipes, can damage internal plumbing, local sewer systems and septic systems. Fixing these backups is costly and takes time and resources away from ensuring that wastewater management systems are otherwise working properly. EPA thanks wastewater utilities and their workforce for their courageous efforts at a time when resources may be stretched thin. Having fully operational wastewater services is critical to containing COVID-19 and protecting Americans from other public health risks. Our nation's wastewater employees are everyday heroes who are on the frontline of protecting human health and the environment every single day.

For more information, see <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>.