

Important information from wastewater companies: Dispose of toilet paper alternatives correctly – avoid backflow from sewers



What now? Whatever you use instead, don't flush it down the drain!

The **corona pandemic** is forcing some people to take unusual measures. When supplies of **toilet paper** at home are exhausted and the shelves in the supermarkets are empty, people have to become creative. Then **handkerchiefs**, kitchen towel, non-flushable wet wipes and **baby wipes**, newspapers and, as we hear, even pages from books and old t-shirts are being used. You can do that if you **don't flush these things down the toilet** after use, but dispose of them with household waste, say the sewerage companies of the Kommunales Netzwerk Abwasser or Community Network WasteWater. Otherwise there is a **risk of blockages** in the sewer from your house, which can lead to backflow, **sewer flooding** of your house and consequent expensive work to put it right, warn sewage disposal companies.

Toilet paper with a decisive advantage

Real, genuine, **normal toilet paper** starts to break up as soon as it comes into contact with water. It starts in the toilet bowl, continues in the sewage pipe and usually doesn't get to the main sewer in one piece. "We hardly even see toilet paper floating in the larger sewers," say those who work down there and keep our sewage system running.

Toilet paper – everything else is poo



Saves trouble down the pipe: throw wet wipes and other alternatives to toilet paper in the trash can instead of the toilet bowl

All **other papers and cloths** have the property of being tear-resistant even when damp. This is the case because **wet tear resistance** is required for their intended application. However, when placed in the sewage system – even within the pipes in in our own house – this can become very **problematic**. You don't usually notice it right away, after all, the first ones don't immediately block the entire sewage pipe. But over time they settle in bends or on straight sections with little gradient. And at some point **nothing works anymore**.

Save yourself trouble!

The consequences can be quite unpleasant: from **backups** and nuisance odour to **unusable sanitary installations** such as toilets, showers and washbasins and even **flood damage**. It can also really cost you money – if you can even get a tradesman on short notice.

But even if these cloths and papers slip smoothly through your pipes, they can still cause problems at other points in the sewage system. Especially in **pumping stations** the tear-proof cloths can block the pumps. This can lead to **hygiene problems** in an entire district, which must be prevented at all costs. Right now we all have other more important problems.

Dispose of toilet paper alternatives correctly!



Marco Schlüter, head of KomNetABWASSER (ComNetWasteWater): “Only toilet paper belongs in the toilet.”

So: when the toilet paper runs out, you can certainly **use other materials** – they just don't belong in the toilet afterwards. They belong in a **bin with a lid** next to the toilet. Holidaymakers who visit Greece know this and can confirm it: it works. It can be done. The garbage bag can then

be regularly disposed of in the **residual waste bin** and you and the sewage companies will be helped a lot.

Also inform your neighbours! In a multi-family house you share some sewer pipe and the costs for the plumber are shared by all. You are also welcome to **share this article in the social media!**

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Municipal network – open to all wastewater companies

The Community Network Wastewater (KomNetABWASSER) is an initiative of currently about 60



wastewater network owners with the aim of jointly implementing the municipal wastewater disposal obligation in a better and more citizen-friendly manner – as cost-effectively as possible and in accordance with the generally accepted rules of technology. The non-profit IKT - Institute for Underground Infrastructure organises and supports the network.

Even during the coronavirus epidemic the network participants are meeting regularly in virtual space. Since there has been a real toilet paper crisis in many places and many people have to find alternatives, the network participants are increasingly discussing problems caused by the incorrect disposal of materials through the toilet. It is repeatedly pointed out that

not only the companies have to eliminate problems caused by wet wipes and other non-flushable products, but that problems often arise on the premises of their customers.

More about the network of wastewater companies on the [KomNetABWASSER website](#).