



Each day, the plant located off Gellatly Road in West Kelowna treats an average of 10 million litres of wastewater. —Image: CORD

Central Okanagan residents reminded to be careful about what they put down the drain

Regional district produces video series about impact on Okanagan Lake

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What you put down the drain or flush down the toilet can affect the quality water of Okanagan Lake says the Regional District of the Central Okanagan.

That's why the regional district has produced a series of short videos explaining what residents can do at home to protect the treated effluent released from the Westside Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant.

RDCO communications officer Bruce Smith says what the videos target is known as "source control."

"Thanks to a water conservation and quality improvement program grant from the Okanagan Basin Water Board and Okanagan Waterwise, we've developed four videos showing what people can do at home, or at the source, to protect our lakes," said Smith.

The videos focus on source control, materials that cannot be flushed down the toilet, fats, oils and greases and leftover medications and pharmaceuticals.

"Our goal is to get people thinking before they let something flow down the drain or flush, so that they're not reducing water quality or contributing to clogged drains and pipes," said Smith. "As the videos say, clean water begins at home."

Earlier this year, the regional district sent an information card to residents serviced by the Westside regional wastewater treatment plant encouraging them to "don't rush, think before you flush."

Each day, the plant located off Gellatly Road in West Kelowna treats an average of 10 million litres of wastewater. Practicing source control at home not only helps protect the integrity of the plant's biological treatment process, it prevents costly clogs and backups of pipes, said Smith.

More importantly, he added, it keeps materials that can't be removed through the treatment process from entering Okanagan Lake, a source of drinking water for many area residents.

- Food waste like fats, grease and oils (deep fryer oil, vegetable oil, cooking oil) can easily congeal and block pipes.
- Diapers, wet wipes, bandages, personal hygiene products and cotton swabs should be placed into the household garbage.
- Hazardous waste materials like paints, solvents and other chemicals should be disposed of at the free household hazardous waste drop-off location at the Battery Doctor in Kelowna.
- Unused or expired medications and prescription drugs should be returned to a pharmacy and residents can visit www.medicationsreturn.ca for more information.

"Collected kitchen cooking oils, fats, grease and lards can be placed into a container and put into the trash, or taken for disposal in receptacles at the Westside Regional Waste Disposal and Recycling Centre in West Kelowna or the Glenmore landfill (in Kelowna), in order to be recycled in a program with McLeod's Byproducts of Armstrong," Smith said.

Links to the videos and more information is available at regionaldistrict.com/wastewater.