

HOW TO HELP AT HOME

Detergents and Soaps

- Choose phosphate and phthalate-free detergents, home cleansers, personal soaps, shampoos, creams. Look for Green Seal, bio-degradable products
- Use natural cleaners (vinegar, baking soda) as much as possible
- Select the proper load size for your washing machine
- Forget fabric softeners – use a cup of vinegar in the wash instead
- Only run your clothes or dish washer when you have a full load
- Use the appropriate amount of detergent: more is not better

In the Garden

- Compost your organic yard waste so you can reuse those nutrients in your garden and grass next year, instead of importing chemical fertilizers, which only add to the nutrient load in the watershed
- Learn to love a few weeds in your lawn and choose appropriate fescues and white clover – hand dig the weeds if you must, instead of using herbicides and pesticides
- Use companion planting and good bugs to keep pests down, instead of applying herbicides and pesticides
- Plant native species, insect-friendly and non-invasive plants instead of rapidly invasive plants, like ivy, lamium and butterfly bush. See more at bcinvasives.ca/resources/publications/grow-me-instead-booklet and at bcinvasives.ca

Septic Systems

- Inspect your septic system annually
- Pump out your septic system regularly. (Pumping out every two to five years is recommended for a three-bedroom house with a 1,000-gallon tank; smaller tanks should be pumped more often)
- Do not use septic system additives. There is no scientific evidence that biological and chemical additives aid or accelerate decomposition in septic tanks; additives can in fact be detrimental to the septic system and will contaminate ground water
- Do not divert storm drains or basement pumps into septic systems
- Avoid or reduce the use of your garbage disposal. Garbage disposals contribute unnecessary solids to your septic system and can also increase the frequency your tank needs to be pumped
- Don't use toilets as trash cans. Excess solids can clog your drain field and necessitate more frequent pumping
- When installing a septic system, maintain a safe distance from drinking water sources to avoid potential contamination. Avoid areas with high water tables and shallow impermeable layers
- Plant only grass in the drain field and avoid planting trees, bushes, or other plants with extensive root systems that could damage the system's tank or pipes
- Never dump new or dated drugs or medicines of any kind into the toilet/septic/sewer. Take all prescribed and non-prescription medications, including creams, to a pharmacy for safe disposal
- Take all hazardous wastes to the proper local disposal sites; find local sites through the City of Chilliwack website here: <http://www.chilliwack.ca/main/page.cfm?id=195>

Pet Waste

- Pick up after your pet to keep nutrients and waste from entering water systems
- Avoid walking your pet near streams and other waterways. Instead, walk them in grassy areas, parks or undeveloped areas
- Inform other pet owners of why picking up pet waste is important and encourage them to do so
- Keep dogs and horses out of gravel spawning beds
- Take part in a storm drain marking program in your area to help make others aware of where pet waste and other runoff goes when not disposed of properly

Be Water Wise

North Americans are notorious for their high rate of water consumption. Reduce water use to lessen the load on your septic field, and reduce the amount of unwanted chemicals and nutrients leaching into the lake. Devices like low-flow showerheads can reduce the volume of wastewater discharged to home septic systems and sewage treatment plants.

- Choose WaterSense-labeled appliances that are high performing and water efficient
- Use low-flush and dual-flush toilets
- Use low-flow faucets, shower heads, reduced-flow toilet flushing equipment, and water-saving dish and clothes washers (BC Hydro has kits)
- Repair leaking faucets, toilets and pumps
- Take short showers instead of baths, turn water off while you lather up, & don't let faucets run unnecessarily

Washing Vehicles

- If washing your vehicle at home, park it on a pervious surface such as grass or gravel (not concrete or asphalt) so water is filtered before reaching a water body
- Use nontoxic, phosphate-free soaps sparingly
- Use a spray nozzle to restrict water flow
- Empty wash water over grass or under shrubs
- Use a commercial car wash - commercial car washes are required to properly dispose of wastewater and many filter and recycle their water