

# BLOCKED DRAINS

## Guidance notes on avoiding blocked drains

From time to time we receive a report of a blocked sewer drain, usually visible from the nearest manhole.

More often than not, the cause turns out to be “wet wipes”. Despite these sometimes being marketed as “flushable”, they are not – and should never be flushed down toilets.

Please see the following information links from Thames Water for more about this, as well as other causes of drain blockages and how to avoid:

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/be-water-smart/Bin-it>

In particular we wish to draw your attention to the following guidance from Thames Water:

- Thousands of unsuitable products are washed down the drain each year contributing to around 55,000 blockages across our supply area.
- This is made worse by confusing and misleading product labelling, which encourages customers to flush unsuitable items, particularly toddler wipes and sanitary items. Although these items disappear when you flush your loo, they can take a number of years to break down. There are currently no restrictions in place to prevent these products being sold as ‘flushable’.
- The only product to pass water industry ‘flushability’ tests so far is toilet paper. Manufacturers have their own tests, which are more lenient resulting in a greater number of products being labelled ‘flushable’.
- To resolve this, the water industry and manufacturers are working together to develop a shared protocol. This project is also hoping to influence product labelling.

### If you have a blocked drain

Unless you can clear it yourself, we recommend that you call Thames Water on **0800 316 9800** (24 hours a day). They may clear it free of charge, but if not then we generally find them to be cheaper than other operators.