



Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

Barry County: 330 W. Woodlawn Ave., Hastings MI 49058
Phone: 269-945-9516 Fax: 269-818-0237

Eaton County: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI 48813
Phone: 517-543-2430 Fax: 517-543-7737

Eaton Behavioral Health: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI 48813
Phone: 517-543-2580 Fax: 517-543-8191

March 14, 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Septic System Do's and Don'ts

How often do you think about your septic system? If you're like most people, the answer is 'as little as possible.' These simple tips can keep your system working longer and help protect your investment.

Know What You Have:

- Learn what type of septic system you have and how it works. The Barry-Eaton District Health Department's Environmental Health Division can help find any septic system records that are on file or answer any questions you may have.
- If your house was purchased within the last few years, look up the Time of Sale or Transfer (TOST) evaluation report. This will tell you what type of septic system you have and its condition at the time of the review. Go to <http://tost.barryeatonhealth.org/tost/> and search for published authorizations.

Basic Maintenance You Can Do Yourself:

- Plan to get your septic tank inspected and pumped by a licensed hauler as needed, usually every three to five years. Check the outlet device (baffle) of the tank to see if it is still in place and in good repair.
- If your septic tank has an effluent filter at the outlet, it should be cleaned at least once a year. Raised mound and alternative septic systems should also be checked once a year – the Health Department or your service provider can provide you with more details, if needed.

Keep These Away from the Drain:

- Garbage disposals should be used less frequently or, if possible, not at all!
- Don't put coffee grounds, oil, and food waste down the drain. Put them in the trash or compost bin.
- Never flush non-degradable products like feminine hygiene products, condoms, floss, diapers, cigarette butts, cat litter, paper towels, and medications. This also includes products such as "flushable" wipes!
- Limit the use of household chemicals including rust and stain removers, drain cleaners, and disinfectants.

How to Keep Your Drainfield Operating:

- Don't drive or park on your septic tank or drainfield as this can damage the system.
- Roots from woody plants can grow into your drainfield and damage it – be careful of the types of trees and shrubs you plant near your system!
- Guide surface water runoff away from your septic system- this includes runoff from roof gutters.
- Keep your sump pump and water softener discharge line from draining into your septic system.
- Spread out water usage throughout the week. An example of this would be to do laundry all through the week instead of doing it all at once on "laundry day."

A properly functioning septic system protects the public from disease and prevents waste from contaminating local rivers, lakes, and streams. For more information, visit www.BarryEatonHealth.org or contact:

Hastings Office: Call 269-945-9516, Ext. 35
330 W. Woodlawn Avenue

Charlotte Office: Call 517-541-2615
1033 Health Care Dr.

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**Media Contact: Lauren Cibor
(517) 541-2624**