



Septic System Care Checklist



This checklist is meant to help homeowners minimize the risk of a septic system failure. For more information, visit www.pugetsoundstartshere.org or contact your local health department or health district.

ACTIVITY	HIGHER RISK PRACTICES	LOWER RISK PRACTICES
Water use	Older, high-flow showerheads and toilets	Low-flow showerheads/toilets
	Leaky faucets or toilets	No leaks or drips
	High capacity, top-loading washing machine	Front-load washing machine
Cleaning supplies	Harsh, strong cleaners (amonia, bleach) or excessive us of cleaners (even organic cleaners)	Moderate use of mild cleaners
	Strong chemical drain openers/decloggers	Mechanical decloggers (snakes)
Laundry	Consecutive loads, mostly on one day	Spaced throughout the week
	Powdered detergent	Liquid detergent
	Liberal use of bleach	Limited use of bleach
In the bathroom	Continuous cleaner (chlorine-type) in toilet tank	Limited chlorine use
	Excessive use of antibacterial soaps	Limited use of antibacterials
	Excessive use of bath oils and moisturizers	Limited use of bath oils and moisturizers
	Overuse of toilet paper	Conservative use of toilet paper
In the kitchen	Frequent dishwashing by hand	Automatic dishwasher (can actually use LESS water)
	Frequent garbage disposal use	Little or no garbage disposal use
Hot tub	Drains to septic tank, drainfield area, storm drain, or nearby surface water	Drains to open yard area (not drainfield)
Medications	Old prescriptions/antibiotics flushed down toilet	Old medicines bagged and trashed
Septic system	Regular use of septic tank additives	No additives used
	Parking or structures on drainfield	Drainfield area protected
	No drainfield reserve (replacement) area identified	Reserve area identified/protected
Water softener or water treatment	Backflushes to septic tank	Backflushes to separate collection and/or disposal

Also consider . . .

- Are footing drains or sump pumps connected into the septic system? This could put excess water into the system.
- Do you have lots of kids? They may need extra education on conserving water and being careful of what goes down the drain.