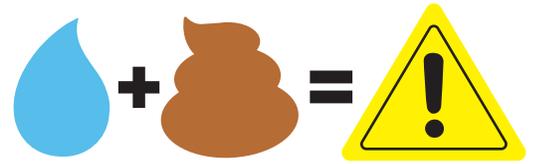


# How Do Failing Septic Systems Impact Water Quality?



Septic systems are made to remove harmful germs & excess nutrients from wastewater. When working properly, septic systems do a great job of this. **But when failing, septic systems can contribute to...**

## Excess Nutrients



**Nutrients like nitrogen & phosphorous feed algae. Too much can cause algal blooms.**

**Some types of algae produce toxins**

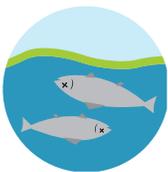


People and pets who play in the water can be harmed by the toxins.



Shellfish absorb the toxins and become unsafe to eat (even if cooked).

**Algal blooms can harm aquatic habitats**



Algal blooms block sunlight, which leads to low oxygen in the water. This can lead to fish die-off.



**Nitrate can get into well water. High levels are unsafe for certain groups like infants and pregnant women.**

## Harmful Germs



Harmful germs get into well water and people who drink it can get sick.



Lakes and beaches become high in harmful germs and are closed for recreation.



Shellfish take in harmful germs and can become unsafe to eat raw.



## What about other pollutants?

Other things can find their way down the drain like medications, microplastics, harsh chemicals, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), paint, and more. Septic systems are **not** built to treat these. They can be released into the environment after going through your septic system, even when it's working properly. The only things going down the drain should be water, human waste, toilet paper, and soap.

**Keep your septic system healthy, keep our waters clean! Visit [SavvySeptic.org](https://SavvySeptic.org)**



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