

Marine Charity Reveals How Wet Wipes Turn Nasty When You Flush Them!

The average cost to sorting out a wet wipe blockage is around £66. Water companies say there are over 366,000 sewer blockages throughout the UK every year, of which between 50% and 80% are caused by fats, oils and grease, wipes, sanitary waste and other unflushable items. Those figures have resulted in about £88 million being spent annually on sorting out the blockages - costs that will be paid for through higher customer bills.

In 2015, during the MCS Great British Beach Clean, volunteers found nearly 4,000 wet wipes around the UK coastline – that's roughly 50 for every kilometre cleaned – a 30% rise on the previous year and a 400% rise in a decade.

But wet wipes also pose a massive threat to marine life. Containing plastic, these squares never go away – they just get slowly broken down and become microplastics which are then ingested. Organisms negatively impacted by ingesting microplastic range from the small zooplankton to larger marine animals such as fin whales and they've been found in mussels heading for human consumption.

"This source of microplastic is easy to prevent and we want any product which is being designed to be washed or flushed down the drain to be free from plastics," says Dr Foster. "Retailers have already recognised the issue of microplastics in face scrubs- designing a product that is guaranteed to pollute the environment isn't smart. We want to see them changing the labeling so consumers get rid of wipes in the right way and help stop tiny bits of plastic getting into our seas."

Press Release from Marine Conservation Society 16th June, 2016