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TIPS TO PROLONG THE LIFE OF YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

One of the worst nightmares a homeowner can face is failure of the septic system. The average lifespan of a septic system is between 25 to 40 years. To avoid costly repair or replacement of the system, and to extend the life of your system, the Central Connecticut Health District suggests the following:

-- **Pump your septic tank every two years**, or every year if the tank is small or you use a garbage disposal. (It's best to compost your kitchen scraps because the use of garbage disposals can lead to early failure of the system and clog the outlet filter.)

-- **Do not dispose of kitchen grease through the septic system.** Grease does not break down easily and will clog the drain field.

-- **Laundry: Space out laundry loads throughout the week and wash full loads.** (The average load requires 47 gallons of water, but front loading machines use ½ as much water.)

-- **Install low usage water fixtures.** Toilets, showerheads, dishwashers, and washing machines that use less water are all available. A family can reduce the amount of water entering the septic system by as much as 20,000 gallons per year using low usage fixtures.

-- **Use liquid laundry detergents.** Powders can plug the drainfield.

-- **Minimize the amount of household cleaners that are allowed to enter the septic system.** These products could cause contamination of groundwater.

-- **Do not use automatic toilet bowl cleaners**, such as "2000 Flushes." The micro-organisms that treat your waste water are killed by the continuous slow release of these chemicals.

Remember, special additives **are not necessary.** Also, water softeners are not allowed to discharge through the septic system.

For additional information, contact one of the sanitarians at the Health District at 721-2822.