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[www.mmdhd.org](http://www.mmdhd.org)

## Learn how to properly maintain your septic system during SepticSmart Week

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), supported by state and local governments, the private sector, communities, and academia, will sponsor its ninth SepticSmart Week 2021. This annual event will take place September 20-24, and will focus on educating homeowners and communities on the proper care and maintenance of their septic systems.

More than one-fifth of U.S. households utilize an individual onsite system or small community cluster septic system to treat their wastewater. These systems treat and dispose of relatively small volumes of wastewater and include a wide range of individual and cluster treatment options to process household and commercial sewage. These systems go by such names as septic, decentralized wastewater treatment, cluster, package plants, on-lot, individual sewage disposal, and private sewage.

Onsite systems provide a cost-effective, long-term option for treating wastewater, particularly in sparsely populated areas. When properly installed, operated, and maintained, these systems help protect public health, preserve valuable water resources, and maintain a community's economic vitality.

EPA's SepticSmart initiative is a nationwide public education effort offering educational resources to homeowners, local organizations, and government leaders to explain how septic systems work and provide tips on how to properly maintain them. This year's theme is, "*Safeguard Your Family's Health, Protect the Environment, and Save Money.*" Each day during SepticSmart week will focus on a different topic:

- **Think at the Sink:** What goes down the drain has a big impact on your septic system. Fats, grease, and solids can clog a system's pipes and drainfield.
- **Don't Overload the Commode:** A toilet is not a trash can. Disposable diapers and wipes, feminine hygiene products, coffee grounds, cigarette butts, and cat litter can damage a septic system.
- **Don't Strain Your Drain:** Use water efficiently and stagger use of water-based appliances. Too much water use at once can overload a system that hasn't been pumped recently.
- **Shield Your Field:** Tree and shrub roots, cars, and livestock can damage your septic drainfield.
- **Keep It Clean:** Contamination can occur when a septic system leaks due to improper maintenance. Be sure your drinking water is safe to drink by testing it regularly.

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## 2- SepticSmart Week

- Protect It and Inspect It: Regular septic system maintenance can save homeowners thousands of dollars in repairs and protect public health.
- Pump Your Tank: Ensure your septic tank is pumped at regularly intervals as recommended by a professional and/or local permitting authority.

SepticSmart Week 2021 encourages homeowners, wastewater professionals, and state, tribal, and local officials to design and maintain effective systems to safeguard your family's health, protect the environment, and save money. Be part of the solution by visiting [www.epa.gov/septic](http://www.epa.gov/septic) for additional information.

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

*We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.*

*Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes*

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