## DON'T FLUSH PHARMACEUTICALS!

Sewage treatment plants deal with waste that goes down household drains and toilets, as well as water collected in storm drains. The sewage is filtered to remove large particles and then treated to remove most, but not all, smaller chemical and biological contaminants. The resulting treated water is then discharged into surface, marine or ground waters.

Septic systems deal with an individual household's waste. The sewage flows through a tank where solids settle out and the fluid continues on to a sandy field where the water leaches through, allowing natural bacteria to break down the sewage before it reaches the groundwater.

Groundwater is water that is stored

in the pore spaces of the ground and is replenished by water percolating through the unsaturated soil above. This includes rainwater and other sources.

All of Suffolk County and half of the United States get drinking water from groundwater.

Marine water

The WATER SUPPLY is the water, either in fresh surface waters or groundwater, available for human uses, primarily drinking water and land irrigation.

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Marine waters

include oceans, inlets, bays, estuaries and marshes. These waters are vital natural resources providing us with fisheries and areas for recreation. The quality of marine waters is strongly influenced by land run-off and groundwater flow.

Fresh surface waters include

lakes, rivers, ponds and reservoirs. They often make up a large portion of the water supply as well as providing freshwater fisheries and areas for recreation. As with marine waters, fresh surface water quality is strongly influenced by land run-off and groundwater flow.

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Pharmaceuticals such as antibiotics, antidepressants and anticonvulsants have been detected in the drinking water of many U.S. cities. Combinations of these drugs that get into marine waters can be harmful to fish, algae and other marine life.

While sewage treatment plants and septic systems remove larger particles from the sewage, it is important to remember that some things, like pharmaceutical compounds, are not as easily broken down by natural bacteria or the processes used by sewage treatment plants. These compounds can alter the chemistry and biology for the environments, marine or fresh, that they flow into. We must always be mindful that what we put into our drains does not simply cease to exist; its flow path continues through to our natural water resources.