

TURKEY FAT-BERG WARNING

Brits expected to pour 3 million litres of oil down the drain at Christmas

16 million adults will pour more fat, oil, and cooking grease down the sink this Christmas.¹

This is according to new research from home assistance provider, [HomeServe](#), which found that collectively 3 million litres of oil will be disposed of incorrectly in December – Across the nation, a quarter of Brits (25%) routinely get rid of their cooking fat and oil down the drain and a third (30%) say they are likely to pour more down this Christmas, with Londoners set to be the worst offenders (42%).

HomeServe is today warning Brits to dispose of their oil correctly to avoid clogged up drains and emergency callouts as HomeServe internal data shows that blocked drain callouts increase by 23% in January compared to the average month. This is potentially due to putting an increased amount of oil going down the drain over Christmas.²

Plumbing & Water Supply Engineer, Liam Sharkey, at HomeServe comments: “Pouring fat down the drain might seem an easy option, but it can wreak havoc with your pipes.

“Christmas is a time we tend to cook more hearty and fatty food, so it’s important to be extra vigilant when disposing of food waste such as meat juices. If they are poured down the plughole, they will solidify and risk leading to a blockage”.

Liam Sharkey from HomeServe offers his top tips on how to avoid sink blockages:

1) Don’t pour fat, oil, or grease down the sink

Food waste – particularly oil – should never be poured down the sink as it can lead to blockages in your pipes. Instead, wait for the oil to solidify and dispose of it in an old plastic container such as a margarine tub. This can then be put in your regular waste when it is full.

2) Be aware of any smells coming from the plugholes

A foul odour from your sink is a good indicator that food or waste may be trapped in the pipes and breaking down to form mould and bacteria. Sometimes, you can deal with the smell yourself by pouring a large cup of bicarbonate of soda down the plughole, followed by a cup of white vinegar. Let it sit for 20 minutes, and then pour down a kettle full of boiling water. It’s good to get in this habit once a week which should help keep your sink smelling fresh.

3) Check your outside drain

If blocked drains are a persistent issue, it may be that your outside drain is blocked, which can be caused by bigger debris such as branches or leaves. If you feel confident, you can lift your drain cover, and inspect inside. If you can remove any large items that you discover with the appropriate tools, then do so to clear any blockages but you should never enter a manhole or inspection chamber to do this.

4) Call a specialist

¹ According to latest ONS figures, there are 54,711,707 million UK adults (18+), 30% of adults say they will pour more fat, oil or grease down the sink this December, which equates to 16,413,512 adults.

² Based on internal data, sink callouts increase by 23% when looking at January callouts compared to the average month sink callouts (21,620 v 17,626) from 2020 - 2022

If flushing the plug holes with bicarbonate of soda, or checking your outside drains hasn't done the trick, it's time to call in a specialist. It may be that there's a more functional issue with your plumbing systems which need to be inspected by a professional such as a loose pipe, or a drainage problem which needs to be rectified. Having some form of home assistance cover, particularly at a time when we know that callouts are busier, can help you keep on top of the issue.

For advice on how to unblock your sink please visit HomeServe's [blog](#).

ENDS

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About the research

Unless otherwise stated, the research was conducted by Censuswide among 2,000 UK adults in November 2023.

A little bit about HomeServe

As one of the country's leading home assistance providers, HomeServe has 30 years' experience looking after UK homes. From plumbing, drainage, boiler, heating, or electrics cover to new boilers and one-off repairs, they're always looking for ways to bring you better care for your home, through their range of products and services. With a nationwide network of Home Experts and a claims line that's open 24/7, 365 days a year, you can count on them to be there when it matters most.

Diversity and inclusion

HomeServe is proud to promote equality and inclusion through all their partnerships, including Business in the Community, Stonewall, Race at Work Charter and the Business Disability Forum. In recognition of these efforts, they've become a signatory of the Race at Work Charter, voted Best Place to Work for Women 2020, achieved accreditation to become a Disability Confident Committed employer and are now ranked in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. In 2021, HomeServe also earned a place on the list of European Great Places to Work.

To find out more, visit homeserve.com/uk. HomeServe - we're on our way.