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10844 Ellis Avenue | Fountain Valley, CA | www.ocsewers.com

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Contact: **Jennifer Cabral**, Public Affairs Office | 714.593.7581 (Office) | jcabral@ocsd.com

Holiday Dinners Stick to Your Pipes

Orange County Sanitation District wants to share some tips on how to keep your plumbing and local sewers free from blockages by properly disposing of fats, oils and grease this holiday season and in the coming New Year.

Homeowners may be surprised to learn that pouring the remains of your holiday cooking down the kitchen sink can cause costly, unpleasant sewer blockages.

These blockages can and do lead to backups directly into the homes of residents. One of the main causes of sewer blockages is grease from residences and restaurants. What happens is pretty simple: It's the build-up of fats, oils and grease in pipes that cause problems. All year long, people pour byproducts of cooking down their sink drain. During the holiday season, it is expected that larger quantities of these cooking fats will make their way to the sanitary sewer system via the kitchen sink.

Residents may think it is safe to allow a small amount of grease down the drain, but sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards too. The results can be very unpleasant: Raw sewage overflow can back up in your home or your neighbor's, posing a potential health risk associated with contact to sewage. Back-ups can also require expensive cleanup often incurred by residents, and lead to higher sewer bills for customers due to cleanup costs.

There are many things residents can do to minimize potential sewer blockages during the holiday season and in the coming year. Here are just a few simple tips from the Orange County Sanitation District:

- Do not put oil, grease or greasy foods down the drain.
- Mix cooking oil and grease with an absorbent material such as cat litter or coffee grounds; place it in a covered container and dispose of it in the trash.
- Scrape leftover food and grease into the trash.
- Wipe greasy pans with paper towels before washing them.
- For turkey fryers, take your oil in its original container to your local Orange County household hazardous waste collection center for proper disposal. Go to www.oilandfills.com for more details.

For more information on how to prevent fats, oils, and grease from damaging your home and the environment visit www.ocsd.com.

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The Orange County Sanitation District is a public agency that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services for approximately 2.5 million people in central and northwest Orange County. OCSD is a special district that is governed by a 25 member Board of Directors comprised of 21 cities, three sanitary districts, and one representative from the Orange County Board of Supervisors. OCSD has two operating facilities that treat wastewater from residential, commercial and industrial sources.

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