

Septic Systems and Your Health

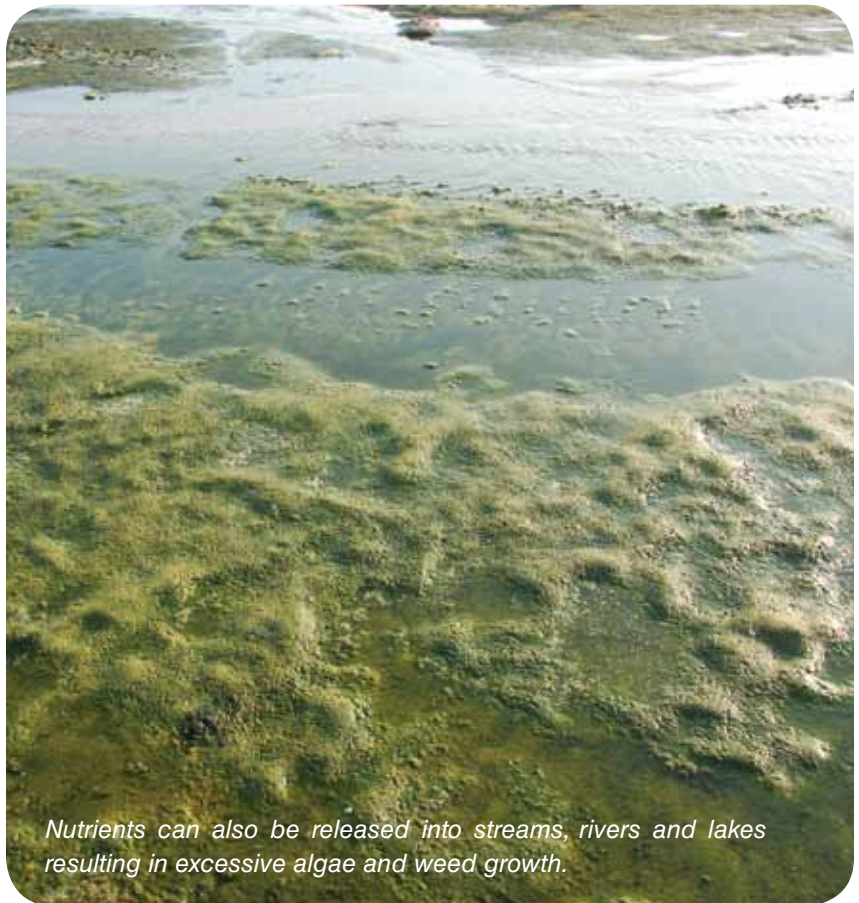


When septic systems fail, household wastewater is released into the environment. Any contact with untreated human waste can pose a significant health risk to you and your family. Untreated wastewater from failing septic systems can also contaminate nearby wells, groundwater, and drinking water sources. Diseases caused by bacteria, parasites and viruses present in wastewater include dysentery, gastroenteritis, hepatitis, and typhoid fever. Many serious outbreaks of these diseases have been caused by contaminated drinking water.

If a wastewater treatment and disposal system is poorly designed, maintained or overloaded, it can have a wide range of health and environmental consequences. For example, excess ammonia discharges can result in high nitrate levels in groundwater. Nitrate is the cause of methemoglobinemia, or blue baby syndrome, a condition that prevents the normal uptake of oxygen in the blood of young babies. Nutrients can also be released into streams, rivers and lakes resulting in excessive algae and weed growth. Medicines flushed down the toilet or poured down the drain can also enter the groundwater and affect neighbouring wells and waterways.

In addition, a failing septic system can lead to unpleasant conditions affecting your neighbourhood and community, such as pungent odours, soggy lawns, and beach closures.

When septic systems fail, inadequately treated household wastewater is released into the environment. Any contact with untreated human waste can pose a significant health risk to you and your family.



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