

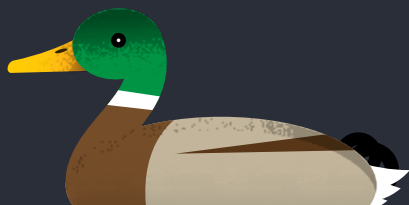


**Metropolitan Water  
Reclamation District  
of Greater Chicago**



9

# Tips to Protect Our Waterways



[mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org)

# Food



[mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org)

**Foods we eat can contribute to water pollution.**

Choose unprocessed, chemical-free foods and beverages. Not only will you be helping your water but you also will be helping your health.

# Car Wash

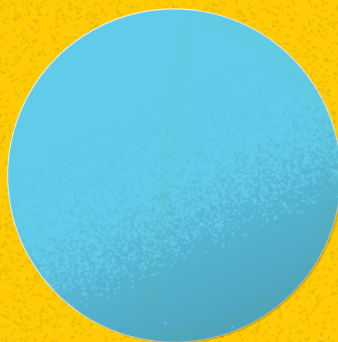


mwr.org

**Car washes are required to properly dispose of wastewater.**

Many filter and recycle the water. When washing your car at home, use a pervious surface such as grass or gravel (not concrete or asphalt) so water is filtered before reaching a waterbody, and use nontoxic, phosphate-free soaps.

# Medication



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**Pharmaceuticals should never be flushed down the toilet.**

Use an MWRD collection site, or check with your local pharmacy to see if they accept unused or expired medications for disposal. Teach children never to handle medication without adult supervision, and talk to your teen about the dangers of pharmaceuticals and over-the-counter medication.



# Microbeads

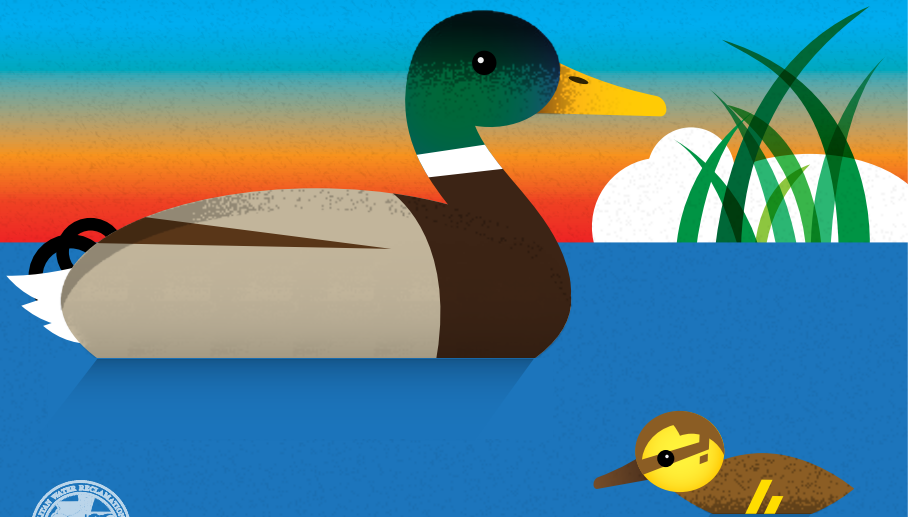
An illustration showing a grey-handled sponge with a yellow and white body. The sponge is shown with several small, white, spherical microbeads on its surface. The background is split into a pink floral pattern at the top and a blue water-like pattern at the bottom. A grey diagonal line runs from the top left corner.

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**Microbeads are still used in hundreds of products, often as abrasive scrubbers.**

If a product says polyethylene and polypropylene, there is plastic in it. Choose natural cleaning materials instead, such as a mixture of white vinegar and warm water to clean hardwood floors, or a mixture of baking soda, salt and water to clean your oven.

# Nutrient Pollution

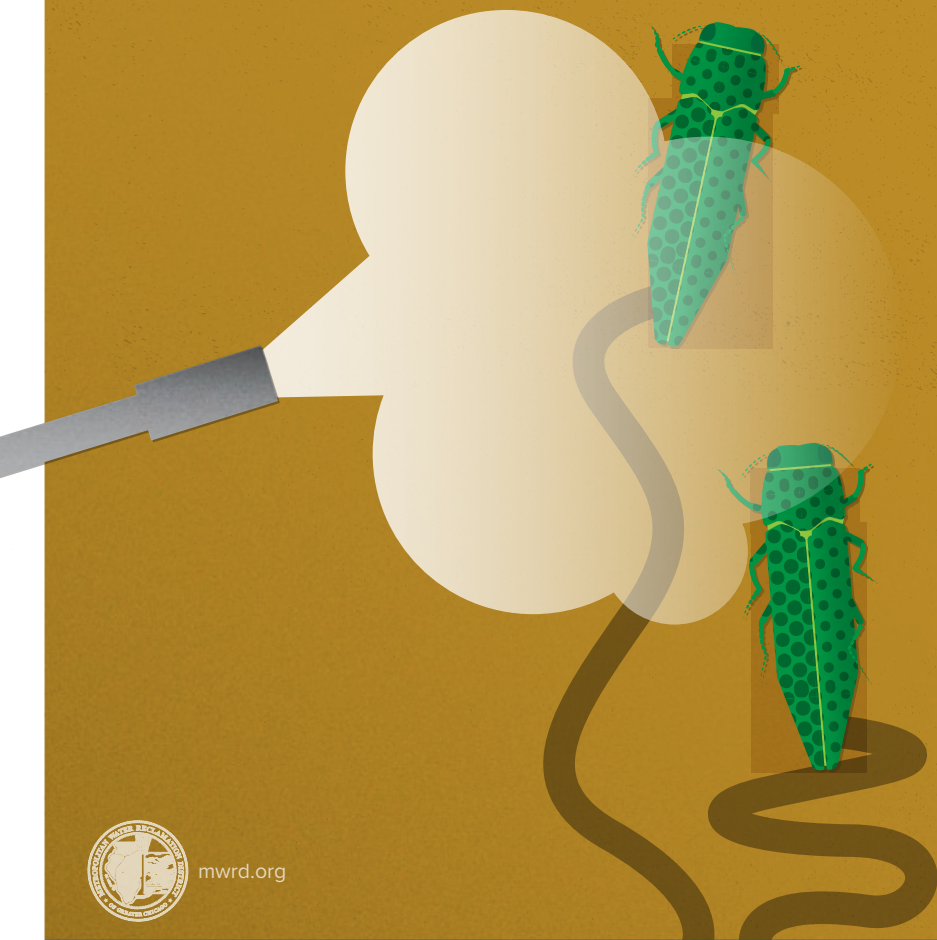


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**Nutrient pollution in the waterways can kill aquatic life and impair waterbodies.**

Keep yard waste like leaves and twigs away from sewer drains, and never sweep it into the street. Choose environmentally friendly, organic fertilizers and select native plants for your landscape design. Native species can thrive with minimal care. Do not allow fertilizers containing phosphorus or chemicals to run into the street or lake. Leave a buffer zone when near a body of water.

# Pesticides



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**Pesticides can seep into  
and through the soil and  
get into aquifers.**

Find environmentally friendly alternatives to chemical products.

# Pets

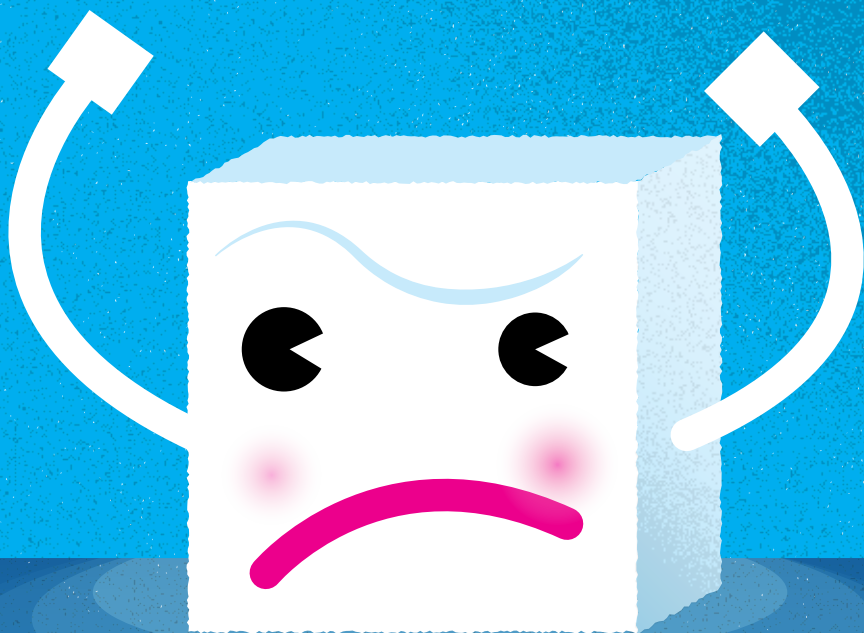


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## **Pet waste contributes to nutrient contamination.**

Discard their waste into a trash receptacle. Do not flush it down a drain nor allow your pet to urinate on a surface that could allow the fluid to run into a nearby sewer or waterway. Take pets to an area like a park that allows the fluid to drain into the ground – away from sewers or waterbodies. Never allow pet waste or medication to enter the waterways.

# Salt



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**Rock salt (sodium chloride) and salt runoff are harmful to surface water.**

Reduce salt usage on snow and ice in the winter.

# Trash

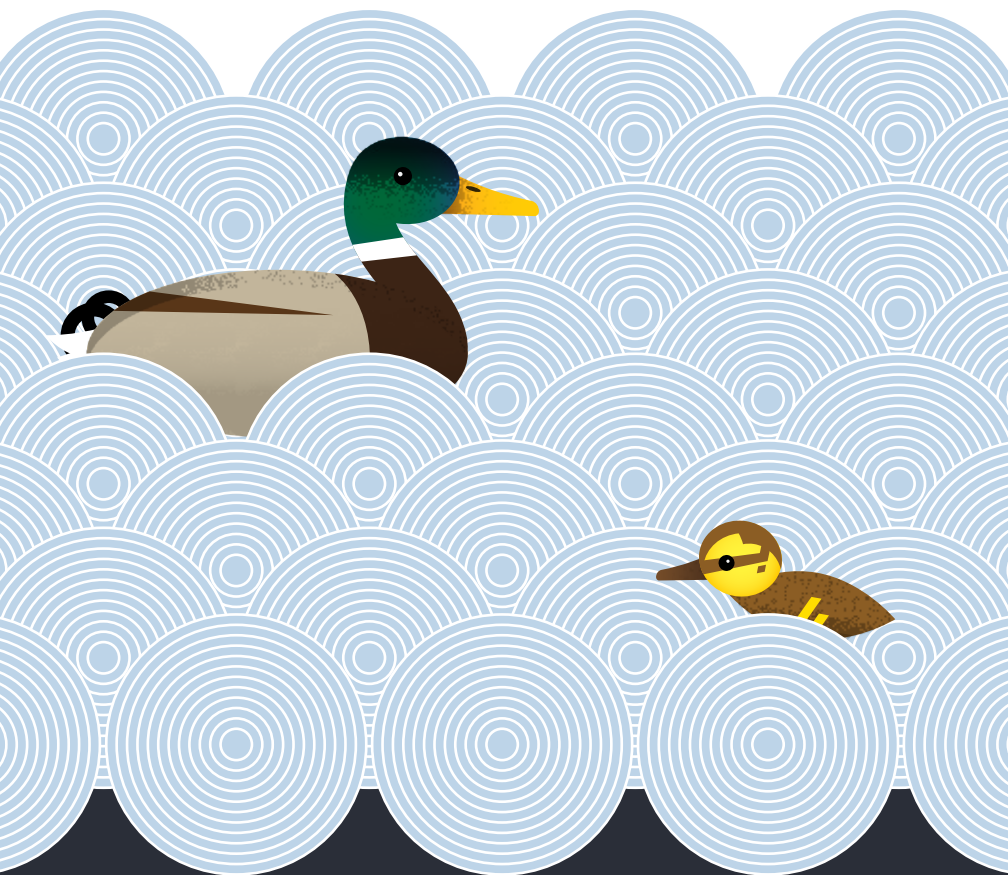


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**Misplaced waste and trash  
can harm waterways and  
take away from its beauty.**

Don't litter. Dispose of trash properly. Recycle paper, plastic, glass and metal. Buy reusable items and choose items that have the least packaging. Report water blockages, illegal or suspicious dumping to waterways and sewers. Call the MWRD at 1-800-332 DUMP (3867).





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