

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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GTCHD Promotes SepticSmart Week in September
Bringing attention to the care and maintenance of septic systems

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) and the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance are joining the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and partners across the country to recognize SepticSmart Week, taking place September 15-19, 2025. This annual observance raises awareness about the importance of proper septic system care and maintenance to protect public health, the environment, and the investment of homeowners.

Many residents in Northern Michigan depend on septic systems to manage their household wastewater. When these systems are properly maintained, they are safe and effective. However, if they are not regularly cared for, septic systems can fail, leading to contaminated drinking water and swimming areas, harmful algae blooms, expensive repairs, and damage to rivers, lakes, and wetlands.

“Maintaining your septic system isn’t just good practice,” said Brent Wheat, GTCHD Environmental Health Director. “It’s a responsibility that protects the environment, safeguards public health, and helps prevent costly system failures.”

The SepticSmart campaign promotes simple, year-round tips:

- Think at the Sink: Don’t pour fats, oils, grease, or harsh chemicals down the drain.
- Don’t Overload the Commode: Only flush human waste and toilet paper—no wipes, floss, or trash.
- Don’t Strain Your Drain: Spread out laundry and dishwasher loads. Too much water at once can overwhelm your system.
- Shield Your Field: Keep vehicles, structures, trees, and excess water off the drain field area.
- Protect It and Inspect It: Get your system inspected every 3 years by a licensed professional.
- Pump Your Tank: Schedule a septic tank pump-out every 3–5 years, or as recommended based on household size and usage.
- Keep Records: Maintain a folder with system diagrams, inspection reports, and pumping dates.

The GTCHD Environmental Health Division promotes proper on-site septic system protection by issuing permits and overseeing the installation for residential and commercial properties. Sanitarians evaluate sites, review plans, and consult with homeowners and contractors to issue permits for properties without municipal access.

For questions about your on-site septic system, call the GTCHD at 231-995-6051 or visit the website www.gtcountymi.gov/822/On-Site-Septic-Systems for more information.

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Proud Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance member: 7 local health departments advocating for public health.