

## Curious Kids: Where does my poo go when I flush the toilet? Does it go into the ocean?

Written by Ian Wright, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Science, Western Sydney University

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Big sewer pipes take all sewage to a place where it is treated. This place is called a sewage treatment plant. [Flickr/Dean Hochman](#) , [CC BY-SA](#)

*This is an article from [Curious Kids](#) , a series for children. The Conversation is asking kids to send in questions they'd like an expert to answer. All questions are welcome – serious, weird or wacky!*

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### **Where does my poo go when I flush the toilet? Does it go into the ocean? – Clancy, age 4, Austinmer, NSW.**

When you press the flush button, your wee, poo, toilet paper and water go down a pipe called a sewer. The toilet flushes the wastes down the sewer pipe. The sewer pipe from your house also collects and removes other wastes. This might be soapy water from baths and showers, or water left over from washing dishes and clothes. Together, all of these wastes are called “sewage”. The pipes they travel through are called “sewerage pipes”. People sometimes get “sewage” and “sewerage” mixed up.

The wastes from your house flow downhill. They join those from other homes and flow into bigger sewer pipes. Some of these pipes are bigger than a bus! If you live in a big city the wastes from thousands of people looks like a river of sewage.

The big sewer pipes take all the sewage to a place where it is treated. This place is called a sewage treatment plant. All towns and cities have these. They are like a big factory where any harmful materials are removed. This is a very important part of our city life.

This video shows how a sewage treatment plant in England works.

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