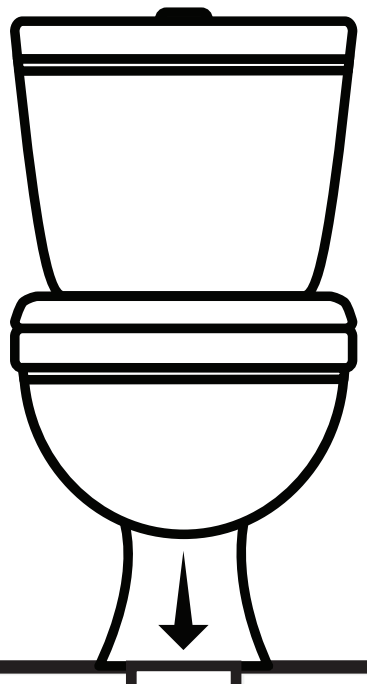
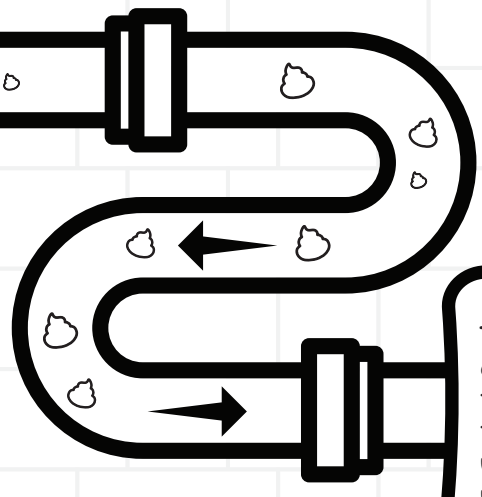
What Happens After We Flush?

How Wastewater Treatment Works

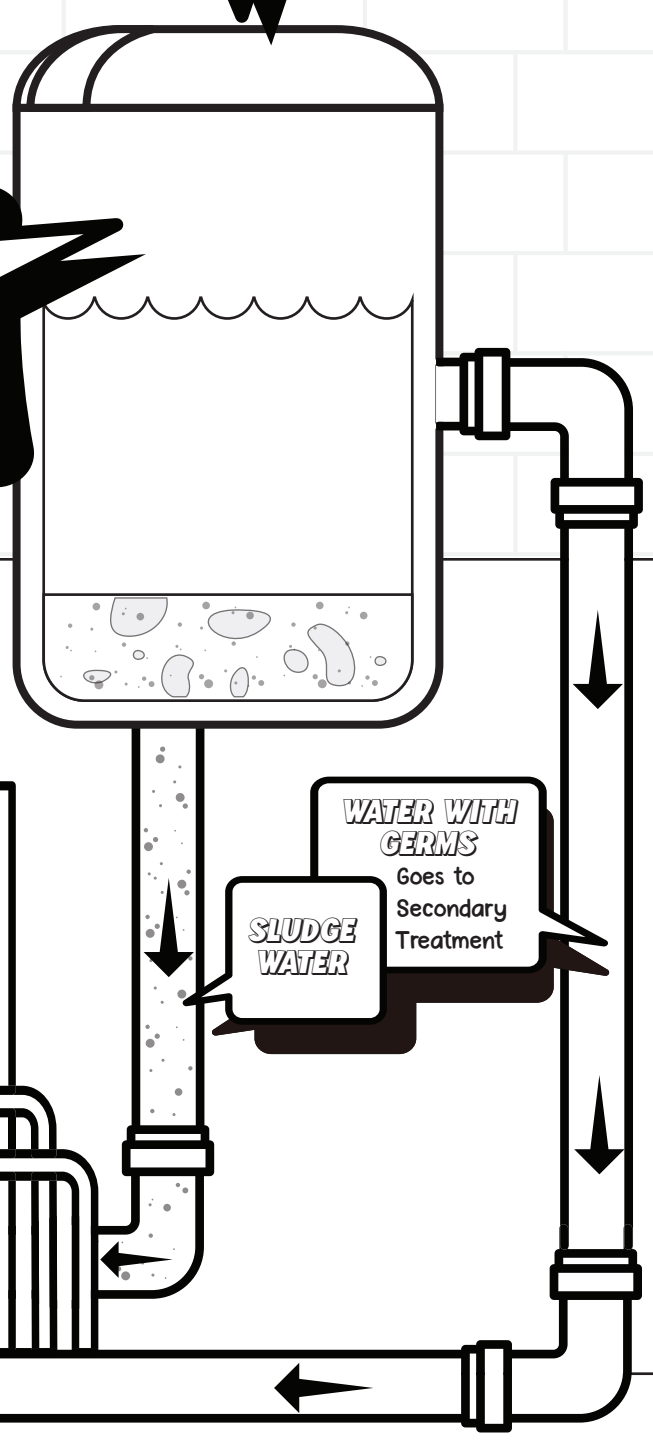


Wastewater and sewage flows along pipes towards the treatment plant.



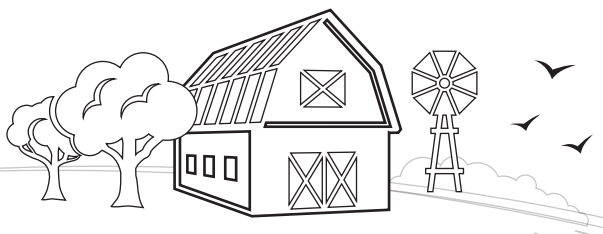
PRIMARY TREATMENT

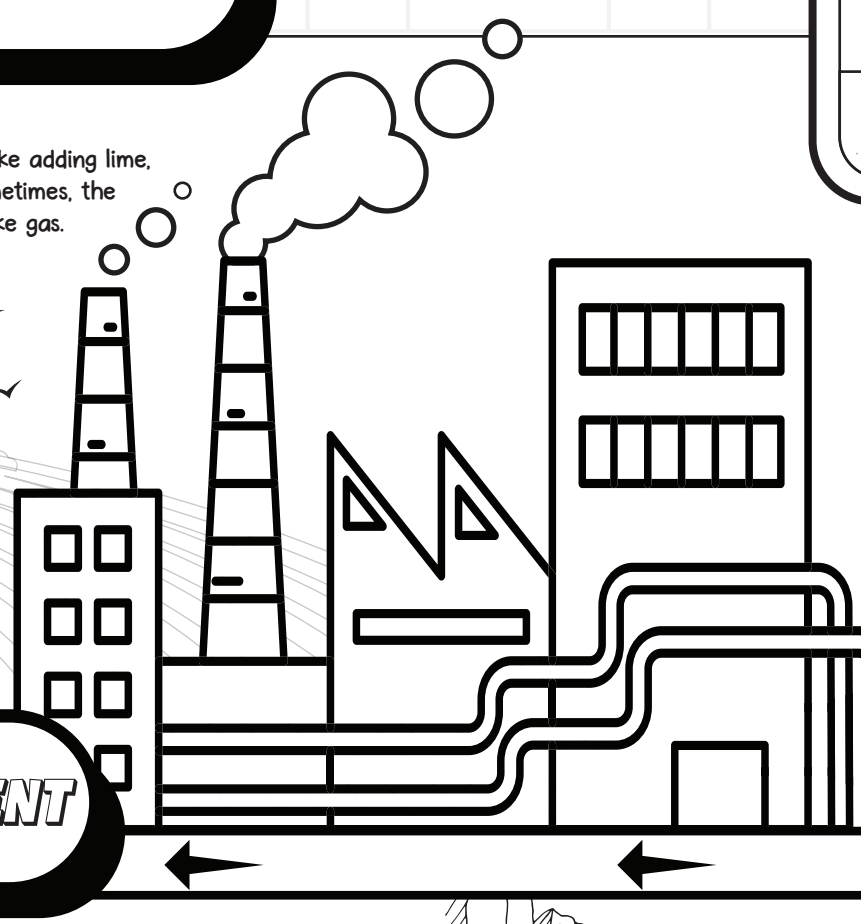
The dirty water goes through pipes to a big wastewater treatment plant. Here the first step is to remove large items that shouldn't be there. Then human waste or poop is separated from the water and called sludge. The clean water is sent for more cleaning.



SLUDGE TREATMENT

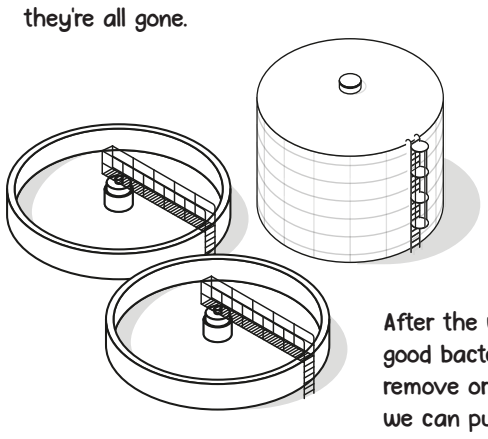
The collected sludge undergoes different treatments, like adding lime, making it thicker, or breaking it down without air. Sometimes, the treated sludge is used as fertilizer for farms or to make gas.





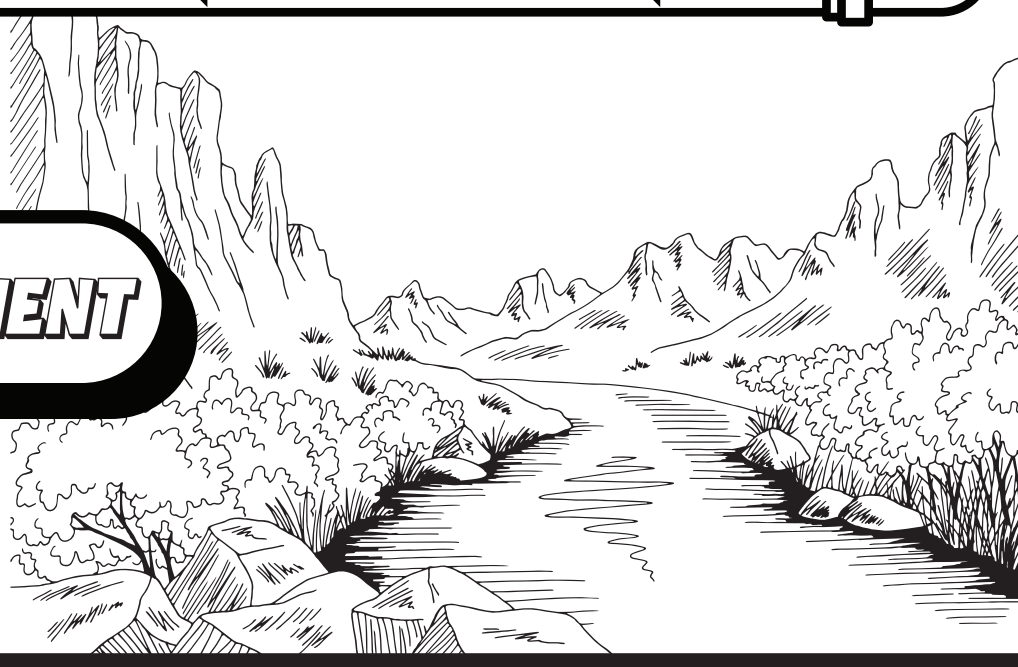
SECONDARY TREATMENT

In the secondary treatment, even though the water looks clean, there are still some bad bacteria in it. So, we use good bacteria to eat up all the bad germs until they're all gone.



FINAL TREATMENT

After the water is treated again, it goes to a tank where the good bacteria sink and make more sludge, which we can remove or treat. Now, the water is clean and safe to use, so we can put it back into aquifers, rivers and streams nearby!



ADEQ Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

For more information visit: azdeq.gov/WQD