



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Does your Septic System need a Check-up?
Make sure you are protecting yourself and the environment**

GRAND RAPIDS – An estimated 45,000 homes in Kent County have septic systems, mostly located in rural areas. Septic systems are basically underground wastewater treatment structures. They treat wastewater that comes from household plumbing in bathrooms, kitchen drains, and laundry. Regular maintenance and care is critical to protecting your family and the environment.

The Kent County Health Department is recommending households with septic systems learn more about the EPA's **SepticSmart** initiative. This nation-wide public education effort is meant to inform homeowners about the importance of proper maintenance. Tips include:

Keep it Protected—Get it Inspected! Have your septic tank inspected and pumped out by a licensed septic tank contractor as needed (on average every three to five years).

Don't Strain your Drain! Use water efficiently to avoid overtaxing your system. Fix household leaks, run the dishwasher and clothes washer only on full loads, and consider installing high-efficiency fixtures.

Think at the Sink! Don't pour grease, fats, or harmful chemicals like paints and solvents down your sink. They can clog or harm your system.

Don't Overload the Commode! Do not flush non-degradable items such as dental floss, diapers, coffee grounds, or feminine hygiene products.

Shield your Field! Care for your drainfield by only planting grass, not driving or parking on it, and reducing roof and surface water drainage near the drainfield.

"Fixing septic systems can be costly and time consuming," says Adam London, acting Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "Taking time to follow these and other EPA guidelines can help your family be environmentally-friendly and save money." Learn more about how your septic system works and simple, everyday tips on how to properly maintain it. Go to www.accessKent.com/septicmart for more information.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.