



HOUSEHOLD PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE

A concern we must all address is the disposal of medication and their effects on human life, wildlife, lakes, rivers and streams throughout our country. This issue is relevant to everyone's personal health safety and the protection of our environment.

Traditionally, unused medications have been disposed of by flushing them down the toilet or pouring them down the sink. This method however, can lead to environmental pollution. Because most wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove pharmaceuticals and their related compounds, they can make their way into rivers and groundwater. Several new studies have shown this type of pollution can potentially impact aquatic wildlife. The potential for human exposure also exists when water is eventually reused.

Methods of disposal for unused and unwanted pharmaceuticals are currently very limited. Disposal programs at the state and local levels are only in beginning stages of development but a few small steps can make an important difference in safeguarding lives and protecting the environment.

Follow your medication prescriber's instructions and use all medications as instructed. If you do not use all of your prescribed or over-the-counter medication, you can take a few small steps to make a huge impact in safeguarding lives and protecting the environment by disposing of unused medicines properly:

- DO NOT FLUSH unused medications and DO NOT POUR them down a sink or drain.
- Be Proactive and Dispose of Unused Medications in Household Trash. When discarding unused medications, ensure you protect children and pets from potentially negative effects:

Pour medication into a sealable plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), crush it or add water to dissolve it.

Add kitty litter, sawdust, coffee grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for children and pets to eat) to the plastic bag.

Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash.

REMOVE and DESTROY ALL identifying personal information (prescription label) from all medication containers before recycling them or throwing them away.

Consult your pharmacist with any questions.

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