**How Proper Disposal of Medicines Protects You and the Earth:**

- Prevents poisoning of children and pets
- Deters misuse by teenagers and adults
- Avoids health problems from accidentally taking the wrong medicine, too much of the same medicine, or a medicine that is too old to work well
- Keeps medicines from entering streams and rivers when poured down the drain or flushed down the toilet

**How Improper Disposal of Medicines May End Up in Our Drinking Water Sources:**

In homes that use septic tanks, prescription and over-the-counter drugs flushed down the toilet can leak into the ground and seep into ground water. In cities and towns where residences are connected to wastewater treatment plants, prescription and over-the-counter drugs poured down the sink or flushed down the toilet can pass through the treatment system and enter rivers and lakes. They may flow downstream to serve as sources for community drinking water supplies. Water treatment plants are generally not equipped to routinely remove medicines.

*According to the EPA*

---

**UNUSED OR EXPIRED PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS ARE A PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUE, LEADING TO POTENTIAL ACCIDENTAL POISONING, MISUSE, AND OVERDOSE. PROPER DISPOSAL OF UNUSED DRUGS SAVES LIVES AND PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT**

**You must not share your prescription drugs—they were prescribed to you!!**

For more information on preventing prescription drug misuse, go to the following websites:

- www.dea.gov
- www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com
- www.justthinktwice.com
- www.campusdrugprevention.gov
- National Alcohol/Substance Abuse Hotline 1-800-784-6776

---

**Got Drugs?**

Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal
Disposing medicines in household trash:

Almost all medicines can be thrown into your household trash. These include prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs in pills, liquids, drops, patches, creams, and inhalers. Follow these steps:

1. Remove the drugs from their original containers and mix them with something undesirable, such as used coffee grounds, dirt, or cat litter. This makes the medicine less appealing to children and pets and unrecognizable to someone who might intentionally go through the trash looking for drugs.

2. Put the mixture in something you can close (a re-sealable zipper storage bag, empty can, or other container) to prevent the drug from leaking or spilling out.

3. Throw the container in the garbage. Scratch out all your personal information on the empty medicine packaging to protect your identity and privacy. Throw the packaging away.

If you have a question about your medicine, ask your health care provider or pharmacist.

Additional Tips

Scratch out all identifying information on the prescription drug to make it unreadable. This will help to protect your identity and the privacy of your personal health information.