

How Can I Reduce the Quantity of Unwanted Medications in my Home?

1. Purchase only as much as you need and take the medication as prescribed by your physician.
2. Centralize all medications in one location secured from children and pets. This may help to limit inadvertent over-purchasing of products you already have.
3. In order to preserve the quality of your medicines, store medications at proper temperature and humidity as recommended on the label. This is sometimes NOT in the bathroom medicine cabinet.
4. Say “No” to physician samples if you are not going to use them.



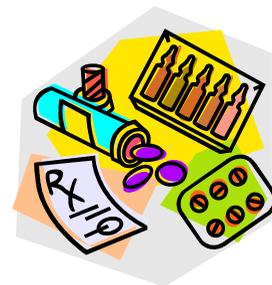
How to Pharmaceuticals Enter the Environment?

Individuals add pharmaceuticals to the environment through excretion, bathing, and disposal of unwanted medications in sewers and trash.

How Can Medications Impact the Environment?

Because sewage treatment plants are not designed to deal with drugs, these chemicals can be released into streams, lakes, and groundwater and affect fish and other aquatic wildlife.

You might imagine that any substance safe enough for humans and pets to ingest as medication can't cause environmental harm. But that may not be the case. Effects on aquatic life are a major concern. If our medicines are reaching streams, rivers, and lakes, organisms living in these habitats may be continuously exposed to these drugs.



Other Resources:

WI DNR Website

Visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/HouseholdPharm.html> to learn more about how to safely dispose of household pharmaceutical waste including disposal options, legal requirements and environmental impacts.

US EPA Website

Visit <http://www.epa.gov/ppcp/> to learn more about pharmaceuticals and Person Care Products as Pollutants (PPCPs) including basic information, frequently asked questions and research.



Information provided by:

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SAFE MEDICATION DISPOSAL



**How to reduce pollution
and prevent poisoning
from unused and expired
medications**

What's the Issue?

Safe methods of disposal are needed for expired or unwanted medicines. Products of concern include prescription and over-the-counter medications. Improper disposal of medicines presents both a public safety and environmental hazard.

Why is Medicine Disposal a Concern?

The three main hazards are:

1. Possible poisoning from accidental ingestion, particularly among young children and pets, if medicines are thrown in the trash.
2. Illegal use or theft, including identity theft, from discarded containers providing personal patient information.
3. Contamination of water resources, which can result in reproductive and developmental problems in fish and other aquatic wildlife if medicines are flushed or placed in the trash.

Disposal Dos and Don'ts

DO:

1. Return unwanted/expired medicines to pharmacies and other locations participating in take-back programs.
2. Take to household hazardous waste collection sites.
3. Ask your physician and pharmacist for advice on how to dispose of your unwanted or expired medicines.
4. Check your state's guidelines on medicine disposal.

DO NOT:

1. Flush down the sink or drain.
2. Place in the trash.
3. Give or sell to others.



Local Disposal Options

MedReturn DROP BOX

Located in the entry way of the Law Enforcement Center at the Courthouse 24 hours a day. This is a permanent collection for your prescriptions, prescription patches, prescription medications, prescription ointments, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, samples and medications for pets.

CLEANSWEEP

Annual Household Hazardous Waste collection held the 3rd weekend in June. Bring your prescription or over-the-counter tablets, capsules, syrups, creams, or ointments for disposal. Please try to keep the items in their original containers so they can be easily identified. (Personal information can be blacked out.)

NATIONAL DRUG TAKE BACK

Contact your local Sheriff's or Police Dept. for collection dates. Usually held in Spring and Fall. This is a great opportunity for those who have accumulated unwanted, unused prescription drugs to safely dispose of those medications.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do local collections accept vitamins and non-prescription medications?
Yes

What about prescription syrups, creams, lotions, liquids and inhalers?
They are accepted at Cleansweep.

Do local collections accept pet medications? Yes

Do local collections accept insulin & EpiPens? The MedReturn box will accept both. Cleansweep does not collect these items at this time.

What do I do with my sharps? Contact the Recycling Dept. for a Safe Sharps Disposal brochure that lists local disposal options. Sharps are collected at Cleansweep but you must put them in the supplied containers yourself. We will NOT accept full sharps containers.

How do I dispose of mercury thermometers? The Rusk County Recycling Dept. has a Mercury Fever Thermometer Exchange program. Bring in a mercury thermometer and exchange it for a digital one.