

Disposal of Expired or Unwanted Medications



How can we dispose of expired or unwanted medications in a safe and environmentally-protective manner? No longer are we encouraged to just flush them down the sink or toilet!

Each city/town has its own options and instructions. The good news is that more and more safe alternatives are being offered to the ones that are dangerous to people, pets, and the environment.

- Find out if your own **pharmacy has a take-back program** or will be participating in any National Drug Take Back Day Programs.
- Find out if your **city has special collection days for unwanted medications, or other drop-off options**. (Contact city/town hall, health department, DPW, or www.Earth911.com.)
- **www.Earth911.com** is always good to check with, and can help you find take-back programs and collection options. Enter your zip code and "Unwanted or Expired Medications."

If you don't have any of the above preferred options, most liquid and solid medications can be disposed of in the regular trash in the following manner:

- **Look for any specific disposal instructions on the drug label or flyer.**
- **Place loose pills and liquids in a sealable plastic bag. Mix with something undesirable** (e.g. kitty litter, used coffee grounds, sawdust). If you use another type of container, write "do not recycle" on it.
- **Throw bag/container in with trash. Do not use sink or toilet.**
- **The FDA does, however, recommend that a few medications be disposed of in sinks or toilets** to help prevent danger to people and pets in the home. These are ones that can be extremely harmful if taken by someone other than the person prescribed for. See www.smarxtdisposal.net for list of these medications.
- **Remove all identifying personal information** from medication containers before recycling or throwing away.