

Proper Disposal of Drugs and Personal Care Products

What should citizens do with unwanted medications?

prescription and over-the-counter
medication samples
vitamins

medicated ointments and lotions
inhalers
veterinary medications

Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove or process many compounds found in medications that end up being discharged into our surface and ground water. National attention is growing to develop more appropriate methods of safely disposing of unwanted medications.

DO NOT FLUSH DRUGS DOWN SINK DRAINS OR TOILETS!

1. Check with the pharmacy to see if they have a drug take back program.
2. Find out if there is a special collection in your area? www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov.
3. Sharps disposal, see the **The Point is...Needles Hurt!** Brochure and the list of needle and other sharps collection programs at www.michigan.gov/deqmedwaste.
4. Chemotherapy drugs may require special handling. Work with your healthcare provider for proper disposal options.
5. Keep pharmaceuticals in their original containers.

The container is chemically compatible, and the caps are typically child-proof.

Scratch out or use a permanent marker to make personal information unreadable.

* Solid Medications, such as Pills and Capsules:

- a. Add a small amount of water to at least partially dissolve them.
- b. Seal the container with duct or other opaque tape.
- c. Double bag the contained drugs in a closeable plastic bag, or put in another container with the lid taped closed and put it in the trash.

* Liquid Medications :

- a. Add enough table salt, flour, charcoal, or nontoxic powdered spice, such as turmeric or mustard to make it pungent, unsightly mixture that discourages anyone from eating it.
- b. Seal the container with duct tape or other opaque tape to prevent leakage and breakage.
- c. Double bag the contained drugs in a closeable plastic bag, or put in another container with the lid taped closed and put it in the trash.

* Blister Packs:

- a. Wrap packs containing pills in duct tape or other opaque tape.
- b. Double bag the contained drugs in a closeable plastic bag, or put in another container with the lid taped closed and put it in the trash.

* Ampules, Vials and IV Bags:

- a. Wrap in duct tape or other opaque tape to minimize breakage.
- b. Place in an opaque plastic container such as an empty yogurt or margarine tub.
- c. Tape closed and put it in the trash.

Double bagging or plastic containers help prevent immediate identification that the package may have drugs and helps contain leaks if the container breaks.

Avoid putting drugs in food that might be attractive to wildlife or pets.

City of Saginaw Wastewater Treatment Plant, Environmental Compliance Office

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