

MEDICATIONS/ DRUGS

Expired or unwanted prescription or over-the-counter medications have traditionally been disposed of by flushing them down the toilet or a drain. Scientists and government agencies are now warning us **not** to flush medications down the toilet or drain. Pharmaceuticals and personal-care items such as antibiotics, painkillers, estrogen, antidepressants, blood pressure medicines, fragrances, cosmetics, and vitamins are resistant to wastewater treatment and trace amounts are discharged into our rivers and streams. A nationwide study of streams conducted between 1999 and 2000 by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) found the presence of pharmaceuticals, hormones, and other organic wastewater contaminants in 80% of the streams sampled.

Disposal Options:

- **Medication Drop Boxes**

Some municipalities now have or will soon have medication drop boxes, are secured in the lobby of the police department- accessible anytime the department is open. No questions asked, just drop the unwanted medications in and they will be safely and securely destroyed. Please call your local police department for details.

Bloomfield PD 785 Park Ave. Bloomfield, CT	East Hartford PD 31 School Street East Hartford, CT	Hartford PD 253 High Street Hartford, CT	Newington PD 131 Cedar Street Newington, CT	Windsor Locks PD 4 Volunteer Drive Windsor Locks, CT
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What CAN and CANNOT be discarded in local medication drop-boxes:

YES	NO
-Over the counter medications	-Needles or Sharps
-Prescriptions medications	-Hazardous Waste
-Medications for household pets	-Thermometers
-Medicated lotions and ointments	-Personal care products



- The United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has initiated National Drug Take-Back Days with local police departments. Check the following website http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html to find a collection site near you.
- If these options don't work for you, it is recommended that you dispose of your unwanted medications in the trash. Most trash in CT is incinerated at trash-to-energy plants, not landfilled, so throwing your medications in the trash will not contaminate groundwater. Follow these precautions to prevent accidental or intentional ingestion:
 1. **Keep the medication in its original container.** The labels may contain safety information and the caps are typically childproof. Leaving the content information clearly visible, scratch out the patient's personal information or cover it with permanent marker.
 2. **Modify the medications to discourage consumption.**
 - For solid medications, such as pills or capsules, add a small amount of water to at least partially dissolve them.
 - For liquid medications, add enough table salt, flour, or charcoal, to make a smelly unsightly mixture that discourages anyone from eating it.
 - For blister packs, wrap the blister packages containing pills in multiple layers in duct tape or another opaque tape.
 3. **Seal and conceal.** Tape the medication container's lid shut with shipping or duct tape, and place it inside a non-transparent bag or container to ensure the contents cannot be seen.
 4. **Discard.** Throw the bag or container in your garbage can; do not place in your recycling bin.

Managing other types of pharmaceutical waste:

Unused ampoules, vials and IV bags – Scratch out patient’s name but otherwise do not open packages. Wrap the container(s) with tape to minimize breakage, and then place in an opaque plastic bag or container. Wrap the outside of the bag or container with additional duct or shipping tape to prevent leakage and to further obscure the container’s contents. Dispose of the container in the trash.

Chemotherapy drugs – These products require special handling. Do not throw them in the trash or flush them down the drain. Work with your healthcare provider to determine proper disposal option for this type of medication.

Additional Information

EPA’s Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Product Page - <http://www.epa.gov/ppcp/> - Find out more about this issue and how it may affect you.

CT DEEP – <http://ct.gov/deep> and search for “safe disposal of medicines”.