

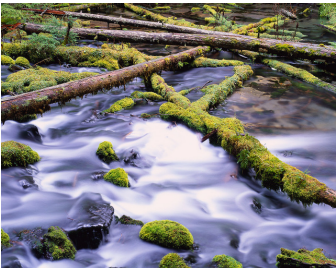
IMPORTANT

RESPONSIBLE MEDICATION DISPOSAL

Do NOT Flush
Do NOT Pour

Unwanted, Unused
or Expired
Medications Down
the Drain

Why Not?

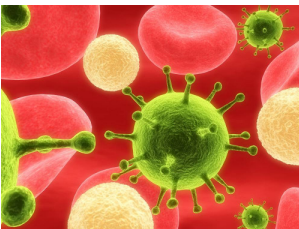


Flushed medications can get into our lakes, rivers and streams

Pharmaceuticals enter our waste-water from a variety of sources, including the flushing of unused medications. A study performed by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) found low levels of drugs such as antibiotics, hormones and contraceptives and steroids in 80% of the rivers and streams tested.

Fish and other aquatic wildlife are being adversely affected

A number of studies have shown impacts on aquatic life. For example, male fish have been feminized (produced eggs) when exposed to hormones (birth control pills). Other drugs, such as anti-depressants and beta-blockers, reduce fertility or affect spawning in certain aquatic organisms.



Drug resistant bacteria might develop

Long-term exposure to low levels of antibiotics might result in the evolution of, or selection for, drug-resistant microbes and bacteria.



Proper Disposal



RETURN – where available, take your medications to a local collection event. Contact your local pharmacy, recycling company or municipality to find out if there is a household hazardous waste* collection near you.

If there is no collection event in your area, dispose of drugs in your household trash.

Before placing in the trash, follow these steps:

MIX medications with something to avoid accidental or intentional misuse of drugs – add water and then salt, ashes, dirt, cat litter, coffee grounds or another undesirable substance.



HIDE all medications in an outer container, such as a sealable bag, box or plastic tube to prevent discover and removal from the trash. **SEAL** the container with strong tape.

DISPOSE of drugs as close to your trash collection day as possible to avoid misuse and/or misdirection. Do not conceal discarded drugs in food to prevent consumption by scavenging humans, pets or wildlife.

* To guard against unauthorized use of controlled substance medications, the NYS Department of Health must approve events that collect these substances. Before you take controlled substances to a collection event, check with the event organizers to see if they are authorized to accept them.



Caution

Be careful when handling medications. Some drugs can cause harm if handled by people other than those to whom they were prescribed. Also, avoid crushing pills as some medications can be harmful in powder form.

Medications self-administered by injection with a needle or “sharp” may be disposed of in the trash.

If such medications include an attached needle, they should be placed in a puncture-proof container, sealed with tape and labeled as “sharps”. However, the state *strongly recommends* that medications with attached needles be disposed of at hospital-based household sharps collection programs. All hospitals in New York State (except for federal facilities) are required to collect sharps from households.



Medications without attached needles may be disposed of in household trash as described under “Proper Disposal”.

Sources & Resources

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

(www.dec.ny.gov)

(www.dontflushyourdrugs.net)

Regional Office: 845-256-3033