PROPER DISPOSAL OF UNWANTED MEDICINE

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HOME AND ENVIRONMENT
4 TIPS to reduce the amount of unwanted medicine in your home

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<td><strong>BUY ONLY WHAT YOU NEED</strong></td>
<td><strong>STORE MEDICINE IN ONE PLACE</strong></td>
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<td>Take all medication as prescribed by your physician, wait to refill prescriptions until you need them, and avoid pharmacy auto-refill programs.</td>
<td>Centralize all medicine in one secure location to prevent over-purchasing products you already have.</td>
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| **STORE MEDICINE PROPERLY** | **SAY NO TO PHYSICIAN SAMPLES** |
| In order to preserve its quality, store medicine as recommended on the label. Avoid placing multiple, unlabeled medications in one container. | Say no to physician samples if you are not going to use them, and make sure your prescriber provides directions to ensure the medicine is taken correctly. |
Safe methods of disposal are needed for unwanted medicine.

Improper disposal of prescription and over-the-counter medicine presents both a public safety and environmental hazard and wastes millions of healthcare dollars annually.¹

Possible dangers include:

1. **Poisonings.** If thrown in the trash, young children and pets may find and accidentally ingest the medicine.

2. **Improper dosing.** Using expired medicine is a risk because medicines may change over time. Older, expired medicine may become more or less potent—as medicine changes, it may become toxic.

3. **Illegal use or theft.** Unwanted medicines may be abused or illegally possessed. Patient information on prescription bottles should be kept private to avoid identity theft.

4. **Water Contamination.** Research has demonstrated reproductive² and developmental³ issues in fish and other wildlife exposed to pharmaceutical compounds, and low levels of some pharmaceuticals have been found in drinking water.
How does **UNWANTED MEDICINE** enter the environment?

**DISCARDING IN TRASH**

Landfill

Chemicals can leach from a landfill and contaminate the drainage water.

**FLUSHING DOWN TOILET OR DRAIN**

Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)

WWTPs are not designed to remove drugs, and chemicals can be released into waterways and drinking water sources.

**RUNOFF**

Farming and Aquaculture

When wastewater or biosolids are land-applied, runoff may contaminate waterways.

**THESE SUBSTANCES CAN CAUSE HARM BECAUSE AQUATIC ORGANISMS ARE CONTINUOUSLY EXPOSED TO LOW LEVELS OF THESE DRUGS**
Add kitty litter, used coffee grounds, or other unpalatable substance to the medicine. Seal the mixture in a leak-proof container, such as a plastic bag or coffee can. Throw the container in your household trash as close to pick-up day as possible.

If you can't make it to a take-back:

1. **Add kitty litter**, used coffee grounds, or other unpalatable substance to the medicine.

2. **Seal the mixture** in a leak-proof container, such as a plastic bag or coffee can.

3. **Throw the container in your household trash** as close to pick-up day as possible.
