



PROPER DISPOSAL OF MEDICATIONS

Just about all of us have expired or unwanted medications sitting in medicine cabinets or locked drawers. What exactly are we supposed to do with these outdated drugs?

Flushing these drugs down the toilet is not a solution since studies show that this can present environmental problems and certain medications have been found in our water supplies. Generally speaking, your pharmacy, doctor's office, local hospital and recycling waste facility are no longer accepting expired or unwanted medications.

“Based on public health concerns and negative impacts to water quality, a coalition of local, state and non-profit organizations have joined together to spread the message that we should now throw medications away in the trash instead of flushing them down the toilet, “ explains Marcia Muetting, PharmD, RP, with the Nebraska Pharmacists Association.

The Nebraska Medication Education on Disposal Strategies (MEDS) partnership consists of the Nebraska Pharmacists Association , the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, the Nebraska Regional Poison Center and the Groundwater Foundation. The mission of the Nebraska MEDS project is to educate Nebraskans on the safe way to dispose of medications to better safeguard the environment and protect public health.

The Nebraska MEDS coalition recommends the following simple steps to properly dispose of medications:

- Take unwanted medicines out of their original containers and place in a sealable bag.
- Crush medications, or add enough water to dissolve them, then mix with soil, coffee grounds or cat litter.
- Place sealed bag in trash, preferably the day of pick up.

For additional information on how you can safely dispose of medications, please visit the Nebraska MEDS website at www.nebraskameds.org or contact the Nebraska Regional Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.