



What to do with unwanted medicine

Only about one-third of medicines get used, so chances are you have old, unused meds in your home. Did you know...

- Every 45 minutes a child under 4 will overdose from drugs found at home.
- About 12 percent of Washington youth ages 12-17 abuse meds, often finding them at home.
- Human meds are the No. 1 cause of pet poisoning.

The good news is that thousands of pounds of unwanted medicines are being collected and disposed of properly at take-back programs across Washington State.

Here's what you can do to safely dispose of unwanted medicines:

Use a drug take-back program. Take your unwanted medicine to one of the Group Health or Bartell Drugs locations that offers this service. Note that they cannot take controlled substances, such as Oxycontin, Vicodin, Xanax, etc. Information continues to change, so please visit www.takebackyourmeds.org to get the most updated facts.



- Do not flush medicine down the toilet or drain. Flushing drugs adds to pollution in our waters because wastewater and septic systems are not designed to treat these chemicals. Pharmaceuticals are showing up in Puget Sound.
- Putting unwanted medicines in the trash used to be advised, but now old meds are considered a household hazardous waste. Do not put them in the garbage.
- In a new program offered at Walgreens drugstores, customers can purchase a postage-paid envelope for \$2.99 at the pharmacy counter and mail in unwanted medications (no controlled substances) for proper disposal.
- Needles are not accepted by take-back programs, but they can be put in the garbage if they are in a rigid, puncture-proof container no larger than one-gallon. A one-gallon milk jug or a two-liter pop bottle is acceptable when capped, taped and labeled "Do Not Recycle." For more information, call Allied Waste at 425-452-4762.

