MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Solid Waste Management Program
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
573-751-5401 or 573-526-3909

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services
P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, MO 65102
573-751-6400

Board of Pharmacy
3605 Missouri Blvd.
P.O. Box 625, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0625
573-751-0091

The information in this brochure is provided as a joint effort by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and the Missouri Board of Pharmacy.

Printed on Recycled Paper

PUB2291 05/17

Proper Disposal of

HOUSEHOLD PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE

The proper disposal of pharmaceutical waste has become a growing concern across the nation. Pharmaceutical waste includes expired and unused prescription and over-the-counter medications. Many people improperly discard these and other medicines by flushing them down their toilet or sink. It is also important to keep the leftover medications out of the hands of potential abusers, as well as children and pets, who are vulnerable to accidental poisonings.

Do not flush medicines!

This practice can harm the beneficial bacteria that break down waste in septic systems and wastewater treatment plants. Also, municipal wastewater treatment facilities are not designed to remove all the ingredients from the medicines in the treatment process. Untreated or partially treated pharmaceuticals are then released into nearby waterways and can impact groundwater. Scientists are concerned about the effect pharmaceuticals are having on the environment and wildlife.

To help reduce pharmaceutical waste:

- Take prescription medicines as directed
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about your prescription or other medicines
- Only purchase and use the necessary amount of essential pharmaceuticals

Suggested Tips for Proper Disposal of Pharmaceuticals

Blister Packages
(Foil-wrapped pill containers)

1. Keep these items in their original container.
2. Wrap the pack with a thick tape such as duct tape.
3. Place the pack into a hard plastic container such as a laundry detergent bottle.
4. Seal the container and place in the trash just prior to pick-up.

Solid and Liquid Medications

1. Remove from original container and put the contents into a hard plastic container, such as a laundry detergent bottle.
2. Add a small amount of dark or acidic cola to dissolve the medicine.
3. Once combined and mixed thoroughly, add a thickening material such as cat litter, flour, salt, charcoal or coffee grounds. Non-toxic powdered spices such as turmeric or mustard may be added to discourage wildlife or young children from trying to consume the material.
4. Recap and seal the container with duct tape, and place it in the trash just prior to pickup.

Drug Take-Back Programs

Drug Take-Back Programs are sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). They are offered to residents by local law enforcement to provide a safe and convenient method for the public to properly dispose of unused or unwanted medications free of charge as funding is available.

Please contact your local law enforcement to obtain additional information and check availability.

DEA-registered pharmacies and hospitals have the ability to set up their own collection sites to collect and dispose of unwanted and unused medications in a safe manner.