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.

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

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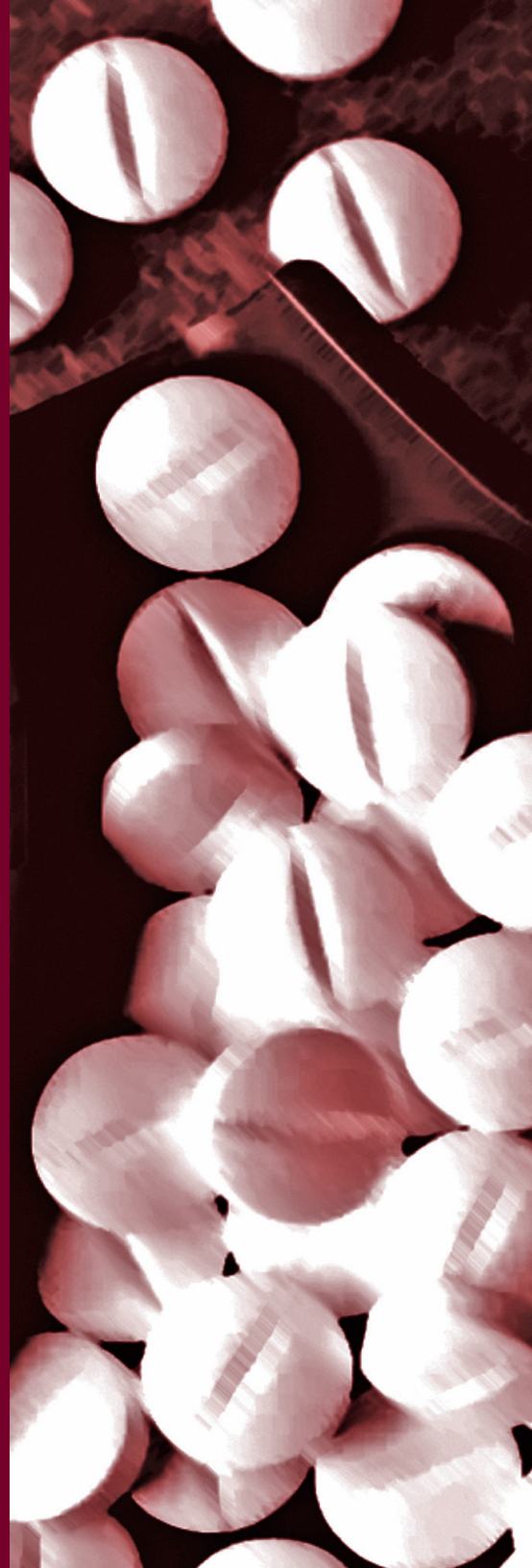
PROPER DISPOSAL OF HOUSEHOLD PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE



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 lakes, rivers or groundwater. Scientists are concerned about the effect pharmaceuticals are having on the environment and wildlife. Studies over the years have found trace amounts of pharmaceuticals and personal care products in drinking water supplies. Adverse health effects may occur if individuals are exposed to drugs in their water supply, so it is important to properly manage pharmaceutical waste.

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 essential pharmaceuticals.

SUGGESTED TIPS FOR PROPER DISPOSAL OF PHARMACEUTICALS

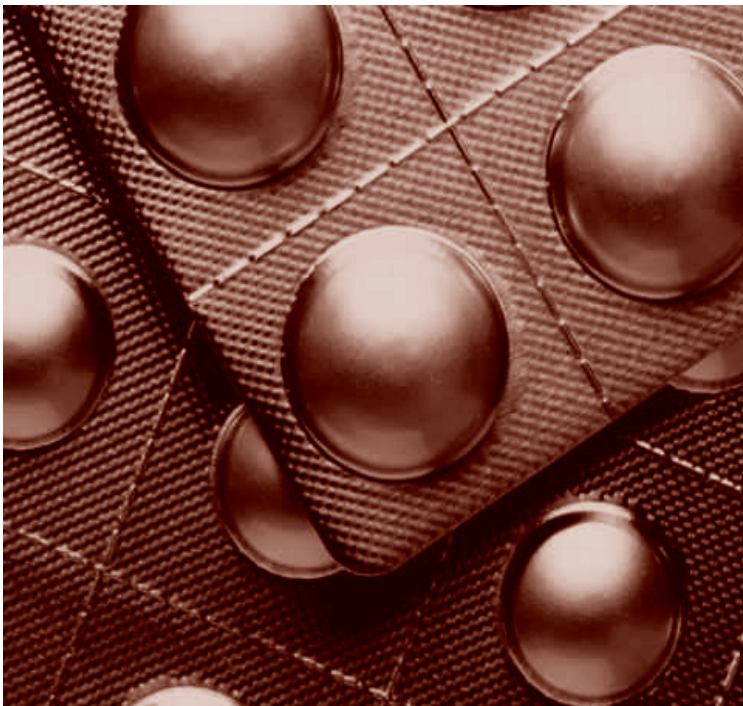
Solid Medications

- Remove from the original container and put the contents into a hard plastic container such as a laundry detergent bottle.
- Add a small amount of Coca-Cola®, Pepsi-Cola® or Dr. Pepper® to dissolve the medicine.
- Once dissolved, add a thickening material such as cat litter, flour, salt, charcoal or coffee grounds. Nontoxic powdered spice such as turmeric or mustard may be added to discourage wildlife or young children from trying to eat the resulting material.
- Recap and seal the container with duct tape.
- Place it in the trash just prior to pick-up.

Liquid Medications

- Remove from the original container and put the contents into a hard plastic container such as a laundry detergent bottle.
- Add a thickening material such as cat litter, flour, salt, charcoal or coffee grounds. Nontoxic powdered spice such as turmeric or mustard may be added to discourage wildlife or young children from trying to eat the resulting material.
- Recap and seal the new container with duct tape.
- Place it in the trash just prior to pick-up.

Blister Packages

(Foil-wrapped pill containers and patches)

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