

Medicine cabinet cleanup

Have you looked in your medicine cabinet lately? How many bottles, tubes, and blister packs have expiration dates predating the last presidential election? And do you even remember what some of those prescriptions were for? It's probably time to do some cleaning. But what should you do with all those unused and outdated medications?

Historically the solution was to flush them down the toilet—but no more. Recent research has identified negative effects on our nation's fish and water supply caused by flushing medications down the drain.

To address the problem of improper disposal and provide guidance for consumers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) teamed up to increase awareness through the jointly developed campaign known as SMARxT DISPOSAL: A Prescription for a Healthy Planet.

Safe disposal The USFWS and the APhA offer the following tips:

Do not flush unused medications. The exception to this rule would be medications the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has identified as having a high abuse potential. Refer to the printed material accompanying

your medication or talk to your pharmacist for specific disposal instructions.

To protect children and pets when disposing of unused medication, the APhA advises consumers to crush solid medications or dissolve them in water and then mix them with kitty litter, sawdust, or any material that absorbs the dissolved medication and makes it unappealing to pets or children. This also applies to liquid medications. Then place the mixture in a sealed plastic bag **before** tossing it in the trash. And remember, when disposing of prescription containers, be sure to remove any personal information from the prescription label.



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