Learn More About ...

If you would like more information about pharmaceutical disposal, you may want to visit some of these links:

There are new federal guidelines for the proper disposal of unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs.
http://whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/news/press07/022007.html

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has gathered sampling data that confirms the presence of pharmaceuticals in aquatic and terrestrial environments.
http://toxics.usgs.gov/regional/emc.html

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has compiled information on potentially negative environmental impacts.
www.epa.gov/nerlesd1/chemistry/pharma

Wastewater Agencies in the Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego area sponsored a "No Drugs Down the Drain" initiative.
www.nodrugsdownthedrain.org

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America informs parents, young adults and teens of the very real risks of misusing medicine, *"Prescription Medicine Abuse: A Growing Problem."*
www.drugfree.org/Parent/Resources/Prescription_Medicine_Misuse

For residents of Tempe, AZ, The Household Products Collections Center for the City of Tempe collects and disposes of household hazardous wastes, including medicines. You must have proof of Tempe residency to use this service.
www.tempe.gov/hhw/we_accept.htm

Contacts for Further Information

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Prescription Drug Disposal...

A Pain in the Drain

No Drugs Down the Drain

If you're like most people, you have accumulated a collection of prescription drugs and other pharmaceuticals that are no longer needed. Once it was common practice to flush these medications down the toilet.

We now know that some of these substances are bad for our environment. The drugs may pass through sewage treatment plants and septic tanks into surface waters, soils, and the groundwater. The federal government has released new guidelines which are designed to reduce the diversion of prescription drugs while also protecting the environment.

New Federal prescription drug disposal guidelines urge you to:

- Take unused, unneeded or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers.
- Mix the prescription drugs with an undesirable substance like coffee grounds or kitty litter, and put them in impermeable, nondescript containers such as empty cans or sealable bags, further ensuring that the drugs are not diverted or accidentally ingested by children or pets.
- Throw these containers in the trash.
- Flush prescription drugs down the toilet only if the accompanying patient information specifically instructs that it is safe to do so.
- Return unused, unneeded or expired prescription drugs to pharmaceutical take-back locations for safe disposal.

Facts About Prescription Drug Disposal

- Drugs can be scavenged and illegally sold, or could poison children and animals.
- Unused medications improperly disposed of can harm you and your environment.
- When drugs are flushed, they may not be broken down by the sewage treatment facilities and septic tank systems and can enter the soil, surface water and groundwater.
- Research studies have shown that exposure to drugs found in waterways is having a serious, negative impact on fish and other aquatic life.
- Pollution prevention - the elimination or minimization of the pollution source - is preferable to cleaning up the environment. Thereby minimizing both public cost and human and ecological exposure.

Why Should I Take the Time To Do This?

Properly disposing of unwanted medications may be inconvenient, but there are some very compelling reasons to do this in a safe and responsible manner.

- ***It's your environment – Please don't flush!***
  Drugs that are flushed down the toilet may pass through sewage treatment plants and septic tanks. These substances are released into waterways with the waste water which can lead to adjacent soil and ground water. Similarly, septic tanks systems may release the pharmaceuticals directly into the soil and eventually into the groundwater.
- ***Abuse is prevalent!***
  Abuse of prescription drugs, particularly painkillers, has increased among teenagers and young adults due to the ease of obtaining drugs. Sixty per cent of the persons who abuse painkillers indicated that they received the drugs free from friends or relatives.
- ***You can make a difference!***
  Children, pets or scavenging animals could find the medication and ingest it. Drugs could be scavenged and illegally sold. Take action to minimize the threat of accidental poisoning or drug abuse. Let's take precautions now to avoid harm to future generations and the environment. Your participation is appreciated!