

## Why Be Concerned?

- The U.S. Geological Survey found that 80% of the watersheds they sampled nationally contained low levels of at least one type of pharmaceutical chemical, with half of the streams containing seven or more.
- Wastewater treatment facilities are not equipped to filter these chemicals out, so many drugs and other compounds are being detected in drinking water.
- The effects of most of these products are unknown, but increased concentrations of antibiotics have produced “super bugs”; bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics.
- The risks of long-term exposure of these substances to humans, animals and ecosystems are unknown.
- Previous information campaigns encouraged consumers to “flush” excess pharmaceuticals, but these substances end up in our drinking water.
- There is currently no national guidance for the proper disposal of PPCPs. The guidelines in this brochure offer safe disposal methods that protect water quality and human health.



## GETTING HELP

Washtenaw County Water Resources  
Commissioner's Office ..... (734) 222-6860

Washtenaw County  
Home Toxics Program ..... (734) 222-3950

Michigan Department of  
Environmental Quality ..... (800) 662-9278

See the Washtenaw County website  
at [www.ewashtenaw.org](http://www.ewashtenaw.org)

For other information about water quality issues,  
please see “The Homeowner’s Handbook:  
A Guide to Water Quality Protection for  
Homeowners Associations and Households.”



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## Prescription Drug and Personal Care Product Disposal



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[drain.ewashtenaw.org](http://drain.ewashtenaw.org)

# Proper Disposal of Drugs and Personal Care Products

If you are instructed to do so by your physician, finish the prescription. For any unused portion of the prescription or other health care product, follow the disposal steps below. Remember to first black-out any personal information on the label to protect privacy, but ensure the drug name is still visible. At present, there are few, if any “take back” programs for prescription drugs. Call your local pharmacy to confirm information on the disposal of prescription drugs.

## Capsules and Tablets in Containers



- Secure the cap on the bottle.
- Cover the cap with duct tape, fully sealing the container to prevent breaking or leakage.
- Double wrap the sealed containers in opaque plastic bags. Tightly tie or secure the bags with duct tape to prevent leakage and place in the trash.

## Blister-Packaged Capsules and Tablets



- Wrap package with several layers of duct tape, allowing visibility of the product name. This will prevent blister packs from breakage.
- Double bag the sealed packs in opaque plastic bags. Tightly tie or secure the bags with duct tape to prevent leakage and place in the trash.



## Ampules, Vials, and Needles



- Do not open or alter the original contents if possible.
- Call the Washtenaw County 24 hour home toxics hotline (734) 222-3950 for information and drop off hours at 705 N. Zeeb Road. Also check the *Turning Trash to Treasure* guide on [www.ewashtenaw.org](http://www.ewashtenaw.org) for a pharmacy drop off location near you.
- Residents outside Washtenaw County should call their Solid Waste Department or Waste Hauling Services for instructions on proper disposal.

## Liquid PPCPs



- Seal the container with duct tape to prevent leaks and breakage.
- To take maximum precautions, add salt, a pungent spice such as nutmeg or mustard, or a bitter tasting additive. Kitty litter, sawdust or an absorbing agent can also be added to the liquid to repel animals.
- Double bag the sealed containers in opaque plastic bags. Tightly tie or secure the bags with duct tape to prevent leakage and place in the trash.