

## Fact Sheet

# Medication Disposal

## How to Dispose of Unused Medications



**Don't:** Flush expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter drugs down the toilet or drain unless the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs to do so.

**Do:** Return unwanted or expired prescription and over-the-counter drugs to a drug take-back program or follow the steps for household disposal below.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Choice: Drug Take-Back Programs

St. Clair County residents can dispose of unwanted pills in the lobby area of the St. Clair County Sheriff Department's Intervention Center located at 1170 Michigan Road, Port Huron Township (810) 985-8115, Monday – Friday during regular business hours. There will be no questions asked, just walk in and give your pills to the designated staff. Disposal is done safely and properly. **Note:** *The program does not accept any liquids, syringes, patches or any other types of medication.*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice: Household Disposal Steps

1. Take prescription drugs out of their original containers.
2. Mix drugs with an undesirable substance, such as cat litter or used coffee grounds.
3. Put the mixture into a disposable container with a lid, such as an empty margarine tub, or into a sealable bag.
4. Conceal or remove any personal information, including Rx number, on the empty containers by covering it with permanent marker or duct tape, or by scratching it off.
5. The sealed container with the drug mixture, and the empty drug containers, can now be placed in the trash.

**Never flush medications down the toilet or sink drains!**

### How Proper Disposal of Medicines Protects You and the Earth

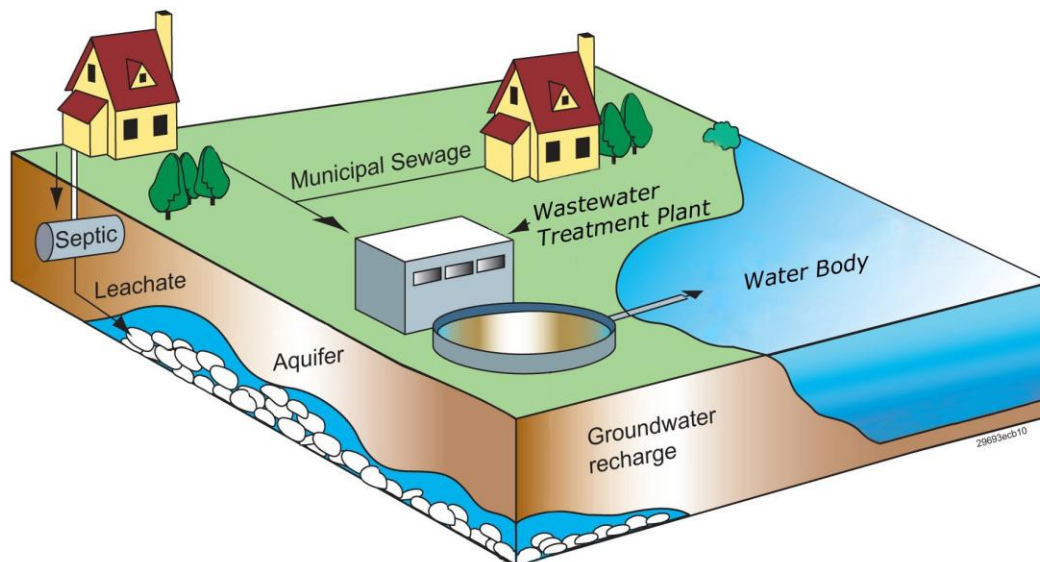


- § Prevents poisoning of children and pets
- § Deters misuse by teenagers and adults
- § Avoids health problems from accidentally taking the wrong medicine, too much of the same medicine, or a medicine that is too old to work well
- § Keeps medicines from entering streams and rivers when poured down the drain or flushed down the toilet

### How Improper Disposal of Medicines May End Up in Our Drinking Water Sources

In homes that use septic tanks, prescription and over-the-counter drugs flushed down the toilet can leach into the ground and seep into ground water.

In cities and towns where residences are connected to wastewater treatment plants, prescription and over-the-counter drugs poured down the sink or flushed down the toilet can pass through the treatment system and enter rivers and lakes. They may flow downstream to serve as sources for community drinking water supplies. Water treatment plants are generally not equipped to routinely remove medicines.



***For more sources of information on this topic visit:***

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT [www.scchealth.co](http://www.scchealth.co)

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES [www.michigan.gov/mdhhs](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs)

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)