



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8440
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

To: All Media

From: Daniel Lowery, CMDHD

RE: Prescription Drug Disposal

Release Date: April 2014

Prescription Drug Disposal

Proper disposal of prescription drugs and medications is crucial. Adolescents and the environment are potentially at risk. Law enforcement and pharmacies have disposal programs for unused medications.

Proper disposal of unused or unwanted prescriptions and medicines is a key weapon in the battle against misuse and environmental contamination. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the number of emergency department visits due to misuse or abuse of prescription drugs has risen 98.4% since 2004. The Office of National Drug Control Policy indicates that more than three in five teens say prescription pain relievers are easy to get from parent's medicine cabinet. According to the website awarerx.org, among 12-13 year olds that abuse drugs, prescription drugs are the most commonly abused.

In consideration to the environment, a study by the United States Geological Survey concluded that 80% of streams that were sampled contained compounds that are found in common medicines because waste water treatment facilities are not equipped to remove or process many compounds found in medications and they end up being discharged into our surface and ground water. Even if you live in a rural area and drink from a well, you may not be immune to the problem. Your drinking water may be affected as it has been determined that many medications including antibiotics, can destroy beneficial bacteria necessary for a septic system to operate properly. The Great Lakes contain over 95% of all surface freshwater in the United States. In Michigan we should be leading the fight to keep our water safe and drug-free.

April 26th, 2014 is National Take Back Day coordinated by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). This is an opportunity for you to take your unused, unneeded and expired medicines to

local, participating law enforcement agencies to properly dispose of medicines. In the previous seven Take-Back events, the DEA in partnership with our state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners have collected more than 3.4 million pounds (1733 tons) and removed them from circulation where they are then disposed of properly. In central Michigan, we have permanent prescription drug drop locations at participating law enforcement agencies. To find out more about the efforts to take back medicines or to find your local disposal site please visit www.DrugFreeNorthernMichigan.com.

You may also find a local Yellow Jug Old Drugs program with participating pharmacies. The Yellow Jug Old Drugs program partners with pharmacies in many communities in Michigan to collect unused or unwanted and expired drugs. A list of participating pharmacies can be found at www.greatlakescleanwater.org. The Yellow Jug Old Drugs program can accept many unused/unwanted and expired medicines. If your pharmacy does not yet participate in the Yellow Jug Old Drugs program encourage them to do so. The Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program is now available state-wide in Michigan.

If you have medicine that you need to dispose of and are unable to find a disposal site or Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program please remember that it is not environmentally friendly to flush your medicines, unless the directions say otherwise. Remove any personal, identifiable information from prescription bottles or packages before you throw them away. Mix medicines with something objectionable like used coffee grounds or kitty litter and put them in a waterproof container before putting them in the garbage.

If you would like an opportunity to get involved to improve our health and environment, consider joining Together We Can. Together We Can is a community project aimed at improving health status in the central Michigan area. For more information LIKE Together We Can Health Improvement Council on Facebook, visit our website at www.together-we-can.org or email us at TogetherWeCan@cmdhd.org.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook.

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