

DON'T DUMP DRUGS DOWN DRAINS

Unused medications and personal-care products (PPCPs) are a group of compounds consisting of human (prescription or over the counter, e.g., antibiotics, painkillers, estrogen, antidepressants, and blood-pressure medicines) and veterinary drugs and consumer products, such as fragrance, lotions, sunscreens, and house cleaning products. These compounds have been detected in trace amounts in surface water, drinking water and wastewater effluent sampling conducted in both the U.S. and Europe. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is looking into the health and environmental impacts of pharmaceuticals in the water.

PPCPs can be introduced into the environment in several ways, including:

- ❖ Flushing unused medications down the toilet or sink.
- ❖ Rinsing personal hygiene and household cleaning products down house drains.
- ❖ Excreting unabsorbed medications into the sewage system.
- ❖ Farm animals excreting veterinary drugs, including hormones and antibiotics, into fields where they run off into lakes and streams.

Water professionals have the technology today to detect more substances and at lower levels than ever before. The fact that a substance is detectable in drinking water does not mean the substance is harmful to humans. Research on health effects for humans for PPCPs has focused on two areas:

1. While PPCPs are found in very low levels in drinking water, there is a concern of possible cumulative effects of long-term exposure.
2. While most PPCPs are known compounds, they may react in ways that are different from their intended purpose once they are introduced into the environment.

Water professionals are also researching the effectiveness of current treatment techniques on removal of PPCPs. Because of the wide array of chemical structures and properties associated with PPCPs, no one single treatment can remove them all.

The best and most cost-effective way to ensure safe water at the tap is to keep our source waters clean. In the past, consumers were advised to discard unwanted or expired medications into household toilets. That is no longer a prudent method for disposing of these items and consumers should not flush medications down the toilet or sink.

What can you do to help keep PPCPs out of our drinking water?

1. Check with your local pharmacy if they will properly dispose of your expired drugs. Some pharmacies have programs to dispose of inventory. This may be best accomplished if you take your outdated drugs to the pharmacy where you have prescriptions filled.
2. Dispose of PPCPs through a household Hazardous Waste facility. Here are two locations:
 - Sacramento Recycling and Transfer Station
8491 Fruitridge Road, Sacramento
Phone: 916-379-0500
 - Sacramento North Area Recovery Station
4450 Roseville Road, North Highlands
Phone: 916-875-5555

Rancho Murieta Community Services District encourages our residents to properly dispose of medications and other materials such as cleaning products, pesticides and automotive products that could potentially harm our drinking water and the environment. Thank you for your efforts to keep our water clean.

(Source: American Water Works Association)