Proper Disposal of Leftover Medications

Environmental and health problems caused by the improper disposal of leftover medications are growing concerns. Drinking water supplies of millions of Americans have been tainted with many pharmaceuticals including antibiotics, anticonvulsants, mood stabilizers and painkillers, to name a few. You should never flush medications down the drain because wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove these substances from the wastewater.

Many local governments in Wisconsin are now collecting a wide range of unwanted and expired medications at Clean Sweep sites or on separate medicine collection days. Contact your local health department and/or local solid waste department to see if these services are available in your area.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center publishes an online schedule of upcoming medicine collection days planned for various locations throughout the state. The schedule can be found at [http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec](http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec) and select “2008 Medicine Collection Days.”

For more information on the proper disposal of medications, go to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Internet site at [http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/pharm/household.htm](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/pharm/household.htm).