



How do medications get into the environment?

Studies have found small amounts of medications in surface water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes) across the country.

Medications enter these water bodies from various sources that include animal feedlots, land application of organic materials, wastewater treatment plants that treat residential, commercial, and/or industrial wastewater.



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Safe Disposal of Household Medications

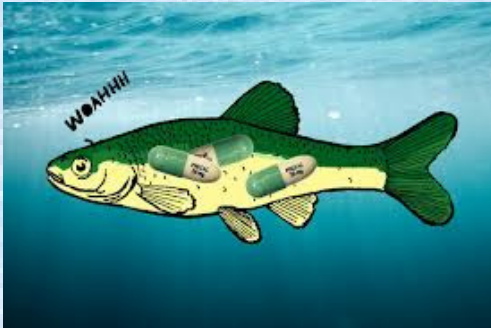


This brochure has been prepared to inform residents in Yuba County of the appropriate practices for the disposal of Household Medications in order to protect the water quality in storm drains, channels, creeks, rivers and ultimately the ocean.

What are medications?

Medications, which are sometimes called pharmaceuticals, include:

- Prescription drugs such as hormones (birth control pills, estrogen replacement drugs, etc.), antidepressants, pain medication and antibiotics.
- Over-the-counter medications such as pain relievers (aspirin, ibuprofen, etc.), cold/flu remedies, and antiseptics (germ killing liquids).
- Veterinary medicines



What are the impacts on human health and the environment?

The major concerns to date regarding the presence of medications in surface water bodies are:

- Increased bacterial resistance to antibiotics.
- Interference with growth and reproduction in aquatic organisms such as fish and frogs.



Disposal Instructions

1. Use original medicine container and block out personal information on label.



2. Add a little water to pills or capsules. Then add coffee grounds, salt, vinegar, or spices making it undesirable to others.



3. Place lid on medicine container and seal with duct tape or packing tape.



4. Place medicine container inside a non-transparent piece of trash, such as an empty margarine tub.



5. Place container in your trash receptacle, out of reach of children and animals.



How do medications get into the sewer system?

There are **two ways** that medications enter the sewer system and wind up at a wastewater treatment plant:

1. Excretion by the human body in urine and feces, and
2. Disposal of unused or expired medications down the toilet or drain.

Wastewater treatment plants are designed to remove conventional pollutants such as solids and biodegradable materials. **Unfortunately, many of these treatment systems are not designed to remove medications.**

Therefore, one way to reduce the level of medications in surface water bodies is to reduce the amount of medications entering the wastewater treatment plant.

This can be done by educating residents and health care professionals that unused or expired medications should not be disposed of down the toilet or drain.

