



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**“Take Back” our local waterways with responsible pharmaceutical waste disposal**

*Participating in this Saturday’s Drug Take Back Day benefits public health, your family’s health and the environment*

**MADISON** — For local residents who have expired prescriptions or unused over-the-counter medications stashed in medicine cabinets or tucked away in drawers, this weekend is the perfect time to dispose of them responsibly by participating in a Drug Take-Back Day event or visiting your local MedDrop location.

“Toilets are not trash cans, and the only things that should be flushed are the 3 Ps: pee, poo and toilet paper,” says Emily Jones, a pollution prevention specialist with Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District. “When unused medications are dumped in the drain or flushed down the toilet, they end up in our local waterways and ultimately impact drinking water.”

Most wastewater treatment plants, including the District’s Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant, are not designed to remove pharmaceutical compounds or hormones from wastewater. Instead, these compounds pass through the plant and into the environment; trace amounts of pharmaceuticals have been found in lakes, rivers and streams around the world. In addition, a growing body of research shows that pharmaceutical compounds can negatively affect aquatic life. There is ongoing research about its impact on human health.

To facilitate proper disposal of unused prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, District residents are encouraged to participate in Drug Take-Back Day this Saturday, April 24.

An annual event, the goal of Drug Take-Back Day is to provide a safe, convenient and responsible option for disposing of old and unused medications. Coordinated by the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), drop-off events will be available around the state. Items accepted include prescription (controlled and non-controlled) and over-the-

counter medications, ointments, patches, non-aerosol sprays, inhalers, creams and vials. Pet medications are also accepted.

Communities offering Take-Back Day events can be found on the [DOJ's Dose of Reality website](#). Safe Communities of Madison-Dane County, which organizes the county's MedDrop program, is also offering drop-off events this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at three locations around Madison; [find event details on the Safe Communities website](#).

If you can't make it to one of Saturday's drop-off events, most communities offer [secure MedDrop boxes](#), typically at their police station or municipal building; many are even available 24/7. Most pharmacies will also take back old and unused prescriptions and medications.

Properly ridding your home of old and unused medications also benefits public health and the health of your family as it prevents poisoning and other potential harm from accidental or intentional misuse of medications.

"There are many ways to responsibly dispose of old and unused medications, but toilets and drains are not in that list," says Jones. "The District encourages all residents to properly dispose of their pharmaceutical waste, whether it's at an event on Saturday or by visiting your closest MedDrop box, to help keep our loved ones safe and our environment healthy."

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We are a passionate and experienced resource recovery team that aims to protect public health and the environment. Established in 1930 to protect the lakes and streams of the upper Yahara watershed, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District serves about 380,000 people in 26 Madison-area customer communities covering about 186 square miles. The District owns and operates 142 miles of pipe and 18 regional pumping stations that convey approximately 41 million gallons of wastewater to the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant daily. Organized as a municipal corporation, the District is a leader in sustainability and resource reclamation. The District celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020.