

## **APhA Provides Guidance on Proper Medication Disposal** *Use with Respect and Discard with Care*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – In response to a growing concern about the improper disposal of unused or expired medications and the recent media coverage about medication misuse, the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) recommends three simple steps that consumers should take to protect their families, community, and the environment:

**1. DO NOT FLUSH unused medications.** Consumers were once advised to flush their expired or unused medications; however, recent environmental impact studies report that this could be having an adverse impact on the environment. While the rule of thumb is not to flush, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined that certain medications should be flushed due to their abuse potential. Read the instructions on your medication and talk to your pharmacist.

**2. When tossing unused medications, protect children and pets from the potentially negative effects.** APhA recommends that consumers:

- Crush solid medications or dissolve in water (this applies for liquid medications as well) and mix with kitty litter or a solid kitchen substance, then place in a sealed plastic bag to reduce the risk of poisoning children and/or pets **before** tossing in the trash.
- Remove and destroy **ALL** identifying personal information (prescription label) from the medication container.
- Check for approved state and local collection programs or with area hazardous waste facilities. In certain states, you may be able to take your unused medications to your community pharmacy.

**3. Talk To Your Pharmacist.** Research shows that pharmacists are one of the most accessible healthcare professionals. As the medication experts on the healthcare team, pharmacists are available to guide you on how to properly dispose of your unused medications.

Medications play an essential role in our society, but medications are powerful. They should be used with respect and discarded with care. Following these simple guidelines can help protect your family and community, prevent the illegal diversion of unused medications, and minimize a potential negative impact on the environment.

The American Pharmacists Association, founded in 1852 as the American Pharmaceutical Association, represents more than 60,000 practicing pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, student pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and others interested in advancing the profession. APhA, dedicated to helping all pharmacists improve medication use and advance patient care, is the first-established and largest association of pharmacists in the United States.

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