

may help over-purchasing of products you already have.

## Concerns of Medicine Disposal

- \* Possible poisoning from accidental ingestion, particularly with young children and pets, if medicines are thrown into the trash.
- \* Illegal use or theft, including identity theft, from discarded containers providing personal patient information.
- \* Contamination of water resources, which can result in reproductive and developmental problems in fish and other aquatic wildlife, if medicines are flushed.



## Resources

**Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful** - sponsors unused medicine collection events. Check on their website for dates: [www.KNIB.org](http://www.KNIB.org).

**Stericycle** provides expert sharps disposal services and containers to thousands of hospitals, private practices, and home users of sharps. Website: [www.stericycle.com](http://www.stericycle.com)

**Waste Management** has containers for purchase. All MedWaste Tracker System containers include:

- sharps container
  - postal authorized return system
  - prepaid postage return
  - environmental treatment and disposal
  - documentation of disposal
- Website: [www.thinkgreenfromhome.com](http://www.thinkgreenfromhome.com)



**IEPA/Rock River Water Reclamation District**, 3333 Kishwaukee St. Rockford, IL. Accepts unwanted or expired medications. Ph: 815-987-5600. Hours of operation: Saturday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm Sunday, noon to 4:00 pm

This Household Hazardous Waste collection site is a cooperative effort between the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Rock River Water Reclamation District and the City of Rockford. It is open to Illinois residents at no charge.

Neither the Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department nor the Ogle County Health Department accept sharps or medicine for disposal. For more information contact:

**Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department**  
[www.oglecountysolidwaste.org](http://www.oglecountysolidwaste.org)  
815-732-4020

2010



# Waste Medicine & Sharps Disposal



**Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department**

909 W. Pines Road  
Oregon, IL 61061  
815-732-4020

[www.oglecountysolidwaste.org](http://www.oglecountysolidwaste.org)

## Disposing of Needles

Improper disposal of home generated medical waste poses a potential health hazard to many, including family members, sanitation workers, people in the community, hotel housekeeping staff and school personnel. Although rare, diseases as serious as Hepatitis B & C and AIDS can result from accidental needle sticks.

\* Residents may use a puncture-proof sharps container which can be purchased at pharmacies. Hard plastic household containers, which should be unbreakable and puncture resistant, may also be used. We recommend a laundry detergent bottle. No milk jugs or coffee cans.



\* Sharps should be placed in the sharps container immediately after use. When full the container should be clearly marked **“Sharps, not Recycling”**. The top must be secured with duct tape, and the container placed in the trash.



\* Do not try to bend or recap needles with their covers as this can lead to an injury.

\* You may also purchase an inexpensive needle clipping device from pharmacies or online which will safely clip, catch, and contain the needles. Then you can toss the syringe into the waste. These containers

can store up to a two-year supply of needles. Do not use scissors to clip off needles, as the flying needle could hurt someone or become lost.



\* When traveling, bring your used syringes home. Pack them in a heavy-duty holder, such as a hard plastic pencil box, for transport.



\* For more information on how to dispose of a full sharps container, contact your doctor's office, pharmacy, or hospital to see if they accept sharps containers. Also ask a diabetes educator about local sharps disposal containers.

\* Keep containers away from children and animals.

## Unused Medications

Expired or unwanted medicines, if flushed down the toilet or drain, are a source of pollution in waste water. Because sewage treatment plants are not designed to deal with drugs, these chemicals can be released into streams, lakes, and groundwater and affect fish and other aquatic wildlife.



It is important to note that disposal by flushing is not recommended for the vast majority of medicines. The best option to dispose of medicine is to take it to a house-

hold hazardous waste one-day collection event or to the long-term HHW collection at the:

**Rock River Water Reclamation District**  
3333 Kishwaukee St., Rockford, IL,  
Phone: 815-387-7400.

There is no charge. Their hours are:  
Saturdays 8 am - 4 pm & Sundays 12 - 4 pm  
(except for holiday weekends).

Another option for unused or expired medicines that do not have disposal directions, is to safely place in the household trash by:

\* Mixing the medication with something that will hide the medicine or make it unappealing, such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds.

\* Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag. Conceal or remove any personal information, including Rx number on the empty containers by covering with black permanent marker or duct tape, or by scratching it off. Then you may put the containers in your household trash.

## Reduce Unused Medications

\* Purchase only what you need and take the medication as prescribed by your physician.



\* Keep medications in one location, secured from children and pets. This