Safely dispose of unwanted medications!

Pharmaceutical contamination of drinking water is an important emerging problem.

Changing our practices can prevent a larger problem for our water in the near future.

Safely Dispose of Pharmaceuticals

516-390-7150
225A Main Street
Farmingdale, NY 11735
www.citizenscampaign.org

Visit http://www.citizenscampaign.org/campaigns/pharmaceutical-disposal.asp for a complete list of drop-off locations in Nassau and Suffolk Counties where residents can safely dispose of unused and expired over-the-counter and prescription medications.

Directions: Find a Drop off Location Near You

Long Island Community Foundation
A Division of the New York Community Trust

Long Island Sound Study
A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

protecting our water has never been more important
Our nation’s waterways have been testing positive for pharmaceutical contamination

- 41 million Americans’ drinking water has tested positive for trace amounts of pharmaceuticals.
- In 2002, the United States Geological Survey found pharmaceuticals in 80% of the waters they tested.
- One-third of all medications go unused.
- The most common medications detected in Long Island water include: carbamazepine, an antiepileptic drug, and sulfamethoxazole, a commonly used antibiotic. Samples also contained acetaminophen, caffeine, codeine, cotinine, and gemfibrozil.
- Compounds from pharmaceuticals can act as hormone mimics and cause reproductive health effects in marine life, including the feminization of male fish populations.

How do these drugs enter our water?

For decades, people were told to flush unused drugs. However, sewage systems and wastewater infrastructure are not designed to filter them out, causing these drugs to end up in our groundwater and surface waters.

The policy on drug disposal has changed, but many people still do not know that flushing drugs is unsafe. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) now recommend that unused or expired drugs are NOT flushed.

Long Island is a sole-source aquifer region, which means residents rely on groundwater for 100% of our drinking water. A thriving aquifer system is vital to maintaining Long Islanders’ quality of life. Contamination of the groundwater from improper pharmaceutical disposal negatively impacts public health and the environment.

Did You Know?

Suffolk was the first county in New York to set up a permanent collection program for unwanted pharmaceuticals. In Suffolk County, Operation Medicine Cabinet allows residents to drop off unwanted medications at drop boxes in any Suffolk County Police Precinct, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These take-back programs are becoming more prevalent, and many Nassau County Police precincts are now equipped with drop boxes.