

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

450 Laurel Street, Suite 1400, Baton Rouge, LA 70801

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Fuselier / Crystal Carter

Phone: 225/346-6883

FAX: 225/344-1132

Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Drug Disposal

For many people, taking medications is part of their daily routine. It serves an important role in treating different diseases, specific conditions, and overall improving the quality of life. When medications are no longer needed, it's important to dispose of them properly. This simple task is crucial to avoid harming others and to keep the environment safe. There have been more than 100 different pharmaceuticals detected in lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and streams around the world. Traces of drugs have even been discovered in at least 41 million Americans' drinking water. This may eventually cause major problems if medications are not disposed of properly.

There are several ways to properly [dispose](#) of expired and unused medications. Medications should never be flushed down a toilet or drain unless the labeling or patient information accompanying the drug specifically instructs to do so. Instead, patients are encouraged to either locate a drug take-back program or follow proper household disposal guidelines. Patients can locate drug take-back programs in their area simply by searching websites such as www.awarerx.org online. If household disposal is preferred, there are a few easy steps to follow. First, unwanted medications should be removed from their original containers and mixed with an undesirable substance, such as cat litter or coffee grounds. The mixture should then be placed into a disposable container with a lid, such as an empty margarine tub. A sealable bag may also be used. The sealed container with the drug mixture may then be discarded in the trash. For the empty drug containers, personal information should be concealed before discarding. Information may either be scratched off or concealed by using a permanent marker or duct tape.

In addition to protecting our environment, appropriate drug disposal is imperative to prevent drug abuse and misuse. Each year in the United States, more than 71,000 children aged 18 and younger are seen in

emergency rooms for unintentional overdoses of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. More than three in five teens say prescription pain relievers are easy to get from parents' medicine cabinets; half of teens say they are easy to get through other people's prescriptions; and more than half say prescription pain relievers are "available everywhere." Engaging in proper drug disposal will not only preserve the environment, but also serves as an effective method to combat the drug abuse epidemic in our country.

Resources:

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm#guidelines>

<http://www.disposemy meds.org>

<http://www.awarerx.org>

<http://www.productstewardship.us/?1048>

<http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/ppcp/upload/ppcpflyer.pdf>

Authors:

Kelsie Stark, PharmD Candidate 2017

University of Louisiana at Monroe School of Pharmacy

Drew Register, PharmD Candidate 2016

University of Louisiana at Monroe School of Pharmacy

The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

###