



Unused and Unwanted

A guide to proper disposal of prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

The **West Michigan Take Back Meds Program** is a joint effort between local pharmacies, law enforcement, wastewater treatment facilities, and government agencies to provide residents with safe, convenient access to medicine disposal.

Funding for this project is provided by the 2012 Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Community Pollution Prevention Grant Program.



Presentation Goals

The background of the slide features a grayscale image of medical supplies. In the upper left, a medicine bottle is tilted, showing a barcode and some text, including the words 'Cause Dizziness'. In the foreground, several white, oval-shaped pills are scattered across the surface. The overall image is slightly blurred, creating a soft, professional aesthetic.

- To increase awareness of the problems caused by improperly disposed of medicines.
- To provide information on how to properly dispose of medicines.
- To share which medicines are accepted at disposal sites.
- To share proper medicine disposal sites.

Why be concerned about properly disposing of medicines?

- Most everyone takes medicine (over-the-counter, prescription and even vitamins) at some point in their lifetime.
- 20% – 60% of prescription medications go unused. Those medicines have to end up somewhere.
- Most of our unused medicines end up in landfills or waterways.
 - Medicines in our landfills can seep into area groundwater.
 - Medicines flushed down the toilet pass through sewage treatment plants and then are released into our waterways.
- 80% of national waterways tested during a 2002 analysis by the U.S. Geological Survey contained levels of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, steroids and reproductive hormones.
- Many of these medicines can cause problems in humans and animals.

Why be concerned about properly disposing of medicines?


- Unused, unwanted and expired medicines can lead to unintentional poisonings of children and pets.
 - Over 1 million children are accidentally poisoned by taking medicines each year.
 - Pets can get into medicines that are left out or even placed in the trash.
 - The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center handled nearly 50,000 pet poisoning calls related to prescription and over-the-counter medicines in 2012 alone. This doesn't include instances where pets were taken directly to their veterinarian.

Why be concerned about properly disposing of medicines?

- The abuse of prescription drugs is a fast-growing problem, especially with teens and young adults.
- Because prescription drugs are legal, they are easy to get, often from home medicine cabinets.
- Most teenagers who abuse prescription drugs get them for free from a friend or relative.
- Many who abuse these drugs incorrectly think they are safer than illegal drugs.

What can be done?

- Know that what is done with unwanted medicines can impact the environment and people around you.
- Store medicines in places out of sight and reach of children and pets.
- Lock up medicines more likely to be abused (such as narcotic pain killers or controlled medicines like Codeine, Ritalin, etc.) and talk with teenagers about the dangers.
- At least once a year, go through all your household medicines and get rid of ones that are expired or unwanted.
- Get rid of medicines the right way.



**What is
the right way
to get rid of
unused
medicine?**

The West Michigan Take Back Meds Program provides residents with free, safe and convenient access to proper medicine disposal.

WM Take Back Meds includes many local pharmacies and law enforcement agencies that accept unwanted medications.



Steps to proper medicine disposal:

Step 1

Gather all unwanted household medicines – both prescription and over-the-counter.



Steps to proper medicine disposal:

Step 2

Leave medicines in their original containers but block out ALL personal information on the label.

Do not remove the name of the medication.

Steps to proper medicine disposal:

Step 3

Find a medicine collection site nearby. Check online at www.wmtakebackmeds.org for a list of participating pharmacies. Many local police and sheriff departments have secure drop boxes too.



Steps to proper medicine disposal:

Step 4

Bring medicines to the correct drop off locations.

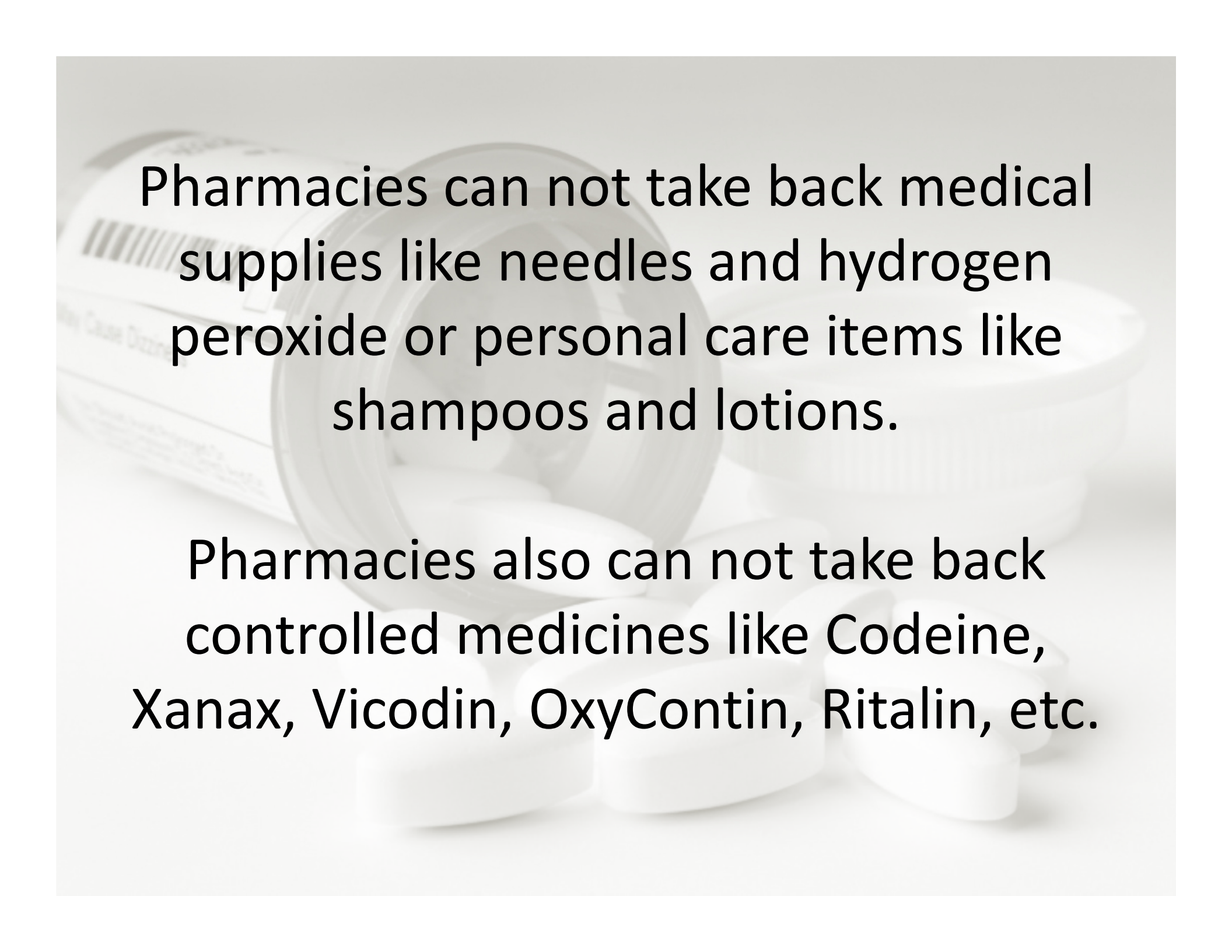
Pharmacies can only take back certain things:

- Prescription medications (non-controlled)
- Antibiotics/steroids
- Cold and flu medications
- Vitamins and herbal supplements
- Pet medications
- Medication samples
- Medicated ointments and lotions

What pharmacies take back medicines?

The WM Take Back Meds Program includes many local pharmacies.

Check www.wmtakebackmeds.org for a complete list or call your closest pharmacy to see if they participate.



Pharmacies can not take back medical supplies like needles and hydrogen peroxide or personal care items like shampoos and lotions.

Pharmacies also can not take back controlled medicines like Codeine, Xanax, Vicodin, OxyContin, Ritalin, etc.

What if the medicines are controlled substances?

Controlled substances can be taken to local law enforcement drop boxes.

Local law enforcement drop boxes also accept all of the same medicines as pharmacies.



Law enforcement drop boxes

- Allegan County Sherriff's Department
112 Walnut St
Allegan, 49010
269-673-0500
- Kent County Sherriff's Department
701 Ball NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-632-6200
- Kent County Sherriff's Department South
8557 Kalamazoo SE
Caledonia, 49316
616-632-6490
- Kent County Sherriff's Department North
790 17-Mile Rd
Kent City, 49330
616-632-6020
- Muskegon County Sherriff's Department – Road Patrol Offices
1611 Oak Avenue
Muskegon, 49442
231-724-6259
- Muskegon County Sherriff's Department – Records Office
25 W Walton
Muskegon, 49440
231-724-6351
- Barry County Sherriff's Department
1212 W. State St.
Hastings, 49058
269-948-4805

*Many local (city) police departments also have drop boxes. Check www.wmtakebackmeds.org for a complete list.



Remember that pharmacies volunteer to participate in WM Take Back Meds.

Please follow all steps for proper disposal when dropping off medicines.

Certain restrictions may apply at any of the drop off locations. Call the drop site you plan to use for more information on what items are accepted.



Resources:

- West Michigan Take Back Meds – Safe Medication Disposal Toolkit
www.accesskent.com/Health/wmtbm.htm
- West Michigan Take Back Meds website
www.wmtakebackmeds.org