



BE GOOD TO THE EARTH

MEDDROP AND SAFE DISPOSAL OF MEDICINES IN DANE COUNTY

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It's not uncommon for people to dispose of their old prescription medicines via the garbage can or toilet, but such practices aren't only environmentally unsound, they don't effectively eliminate the drug. With more than 6 percent of teens in Dane County reporting nonmedical use of prescription drugs—sometimes leading to hospitalization for poisoning—it's not only important to be educated on the harms of improper disposal but also on how to take advantage of medicine disposal programs, such as MedDrop.

The sad truth is that last year, poisonings killed more Dane County resi-

dents than automobile crashes. According to the United Way of Dane County, nearly one in five older adults admitted to the emergency room have suffered a fall or negative drug reaction (the unintended negative impact of one or more prescriptions, over-the-counter meds, or supplements). In a day where heroine overdoses take the spotlight, the nearly half million emergency room visits from prescription medicines don't get the attention they deserve.

"With drug overdose now exceeding traffic crashes as Dane County's number one cause of injury-related death, MedDrop addresses a critical

safety concern by preventing misuse and diversion of these drugs," says Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. Since 2012, 350 partner organizations of Safe Communities and law enforcement agencies at 13 Dane County MedDrop box locations have collected 23 tons of unused medicines, preventing the misuse of prescription drugs in an environmentally friendly fashion.

Maybe the impact on the environment isn't too noticeable at home, but for outdoor enthusiasts, the negative effects are seen daily. A study by the U.S. Geological Survey found traces of pharmaceutical waste and

hormones in 80 percent of streams sampled, explaining why environmental stewardship programs became involved with the safe-disposal initiative. With MedDrop and similar programs, all medicines are kept out of the community water supply because they are incinerated at U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved facilities.

“Our mission at Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) is protecting public health and the environment, and partnering with Safe Communities’ MedDrop to encourage safe pharmaceutical disposal is a great opportunity to do both,” says Chief Engineer and Director at MMSD Michael Mucha. Though the initiatives taken by MMSD and other facilities are a leap in the right direction, the opportunities to better the community don’t only lie in the hands of public services, but in the hands of each citizen.

So where can you start? First off, be aware of what you can dispose of in MedDrop boxes. These items include prescription medicine and over-the-counter medicine (pills, liquids, and creams), pet medication, inhalers, vitamins, nebulizer solution, medicine samples, but excludes sharps—items such as needles.

The next step is cleaning out all places where medicine is stored to ensure forgotten medications are found and disposed of. Be sure to check bathroom medicine cabinets, closets, night stands, and kitchen cupboards.

When you arrive at one of the MedDrop locations (listed in the sidebar), empty contents of pill bottles into a resealable bag. Be sure to



MedDrop Locations

Visit one of the 13 MedDrop Box Locations in Dane County to safely dispose of medicines.

Blue Mounds Police Department

11011 Brigham Ave.
Blue Mounds
(608) 437-5197

Cambridge Police Department

200 S. Spring St., Cambridge
(608) 423-4328

Deerfield Police Department

7 W. Deerfield St., Deerfield
(608) 764-5626

Fitchburg Police Department

5520 Lacy Rd., Fitchburg
(608) 270-4300

Madison Police East District

809 S. Thompson Dr., Madison
(608) 266-4887

Madison Police West District

1710 McKenna Blvd., Madison
(608) 243-0500

University of Wisconsin– Madison Police Department

1429 Monroe St., Madison
(608) 264-2677

Mazomanie Police Department

133 Crescent St., Mazomanie
(608) 767-2762

McFarland Police Department

5915 Milwaukee St., McFarland
(608) 838-3151

Middleton Police Department

7341 Donna Dr., Middleton
(608) 824-7300

Oregon Police Department

383 Park St., Oregon
(608) 835-3111

Sun Prairie Police Department

300 E. Main St., Sun Prairie
(608) 837-7336

Waunakee Police Department

205 N. Klein Dr., Waunakee
(608) 849-4523



keep liquids, gels, and creams in their original containers before placing the tubes or packaging into a resealable bag for disposal.

Taking time from your day to help keep our waters clean and our community healthy, all while creating a safer household for yourself, is worth the effort. Start contributing to the thousands upon thousands of pounds of medicines that are transported and destroyed each year. You'll be making an impact that will last for generations.

Safe Communities Madison-Dane County is a local nonprofit coalition that brings together public and private sector partners to save lives, prevent injuries, and make our community a safer place. The focus is on projects and programs with a demonstrated track record of positive impact and success. Core areas of work correspond to the community's top causes of injury and injury-related death: traffic safety, pedestrian safety, child safety, drug poisoning prevention, falls pre-

vention, and suicide prevention. More than 350 organizations—including area businesses, law enforcement and fire/EMS services, neighborhoods, health care leaders, youth- and senior-serving agencies—actively collaborate on programs to make Dane County a safer place to live, work, and play. For more information, visit safercommunity.net or call (608) 441-3060.

Cheryl Wittke is the Executive Director at Safe Communities of Madison-Dane County, a local nonprofit coalition that brings together public and private sector partners to save lives, prevent injuries, and make our community a safer place.

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WPS HEALTH SOLUTIONS
(608) 221-4711
wpsic.com

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

These disabilities are attributable to brain injury, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, intellectual or mental disability, or another neurological condition closely related to intellectual or mental disability which has continued or can be expected to continue indefinitely and constitutes a substantial handicap to the afflicted individual.

THE ARC-DANE COUNTY
(608) 833-1199
arcdanecounty.org

COMMON THREADS
(608) 838-8999
commonthreadsmadison.org

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
WISCONSIN
(608) 265-9440
cow.waisman.wisc.edu

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Rise UP is a nonprofit residential agency that supports adults/older adults who have disabilities in their own homes and apartments in the community. It is our mission to provide the people served with opportunities for maximum choice, independence, and personal growth.