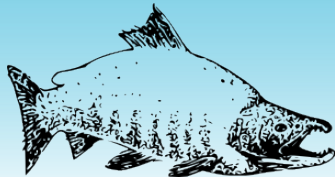




It is important to understand that when medications are flushed down the toilet or poured down the drain, they flow through the sewer system to local wastewater treatment facilities.

Proper disposal of unused medications can help protect and maintain the health of our environment.

*This brochure was created by Jenna Fredenhagen, a graduate of the Environmental Science program at Alaska Pacific University. This is a culmination of her research project, Pharmaceuticals in Wastewater, Ending the "Out of Site Out of Mind" Attitude Through Public Education in Anchorage, Alaska.*



**The goal of Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility is to support the public and environmental health of the community by providing quality wastewater services in a responsible, efficient and sustainable manner.**

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# An Important Message from Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility



## New Environmental Pollutants

New research has found that small amounts of pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) are entering the environment through wastewater treatment facilities. These PPCPs have made their way into aquatic environments through improper disposal of medications.

PPCPs can find their way into the environment via flushing unused medications down the toilet or pouring them down the drain. Wastewater treatment facilities are not designed to fully eliminate pharmaceuticals from the waste stream.

It is important to remember that ANYTHING flushed down the toilet or poured down the drain at your residence is carried by sewers to your local wastewater treatment facility. The John M Asplund, Eagle River, and Girdwood wastewater treatment facilities treat wastewater prior to its discharge into Cook Inlet, Eagle River and Glacier Creek.

**DO NOT FLUSH**  
**unused medications and**  
**DO NOT POUR**  
**them down the sink or drain.**

## A Few Steps Can Help Keep

Follow your medication providers' instructions and use all medications as instructed. If you do not use all of your prescribed or over-the-counter medication, you can take a few steps to make an impact in protecting the environment by disposing of unused medicines properly:

**1) DO NOT FLUSH** unused medications and **DO NOT POUR** them down a sink or drain.



**2) Be proactive** and dispose of unused medication in household trash. When discarding unused medications, ensure you protect children and pets from potentially negative effects:

- a) Pour medication into a sealable plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), crush it or add water to dissolve it.
- b) Add an absorbent material, such as kitty litter, sawdust, coffee grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for pets and children to eat) to the plastic bag.

## Our Environment Healthy

- c) Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash.
- d) Remove and destroy ALL personal information (prescription label) from all medication containers before recycling them or throwing them into the trash.

**3) Check** with your pharmacy or veterinary clinic for approved local take-back programs for unused medications.

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## A Final Note from AWWU

Maintenance of the sewer system and wastewater treatment plants is expensive, especially if materials are flushed into the drain that don't belong in the sewer. You can help keep costs down and help keep our water resources clean by disposing of materials properly.

Public awareness will help AWWU to protect and maintain the health of our environment.

With help from Anchorage residents we can continue to preserve the vitality and beauty of Cook Inlet.