

Missoula County Media Release

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Help Reduce Poisonings by Disposing Unneeded Medications at Prescription Drug Take Back

The Missoula Prescription Drug Task Force will partner with the Missoula Police Department and the University of Montana Skaggs School of Pharmacy to help area residents dispose of their unused, expired or unneeded prescription medications at this weekend's DEA Prescription Drug Take Back.

People can drop off pills, with or without the bottles, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27, by the clock tower at Southgate Mall — no questions asked. The Missoula Prescription Drug Task Force, coordinated by the Missoula Forum for Children and Youth and the Missoula City-County Health Department, co-host these events twice a year to help reduce the harm caused by prescription drug misuse and accidental poisonings.

Properly disposing of medications is important for many reasons, including suicide prevention.

“Montana currently has the highest suicide rate in the nation, and overdose is the third highest means of suicide in our state,” said Leah Fitch, the Missoula Forum for Children and Youth outreach coordinator. “Reducing access to large amounts of prescription drugs can potentially reduce the likelihood of someone attempting suicide by poisoning.”

In addition, she said, disposing of medications can reduce poisonings among young children. Every minute of every day, a poison control center receives a call about a potential medicine poisoning for a child age five and under. And in 86 percent of emergency department visits for medicine poisoning, the child accessed medicine belonging to a parent or grandparent.

The Prescription Drug Task Force encourages community members, especially parents and grandparents, to keep medications locked up and out of reach and to properly dispose of any unused or expired medications at one of the biannual DEA Take Back events. Missoula also has six permanent drop box locations. A complete list of those locations, as well as more information on the proper use, storage and disposal of medications, is online at www.choicesmattermissoula.com.

For more information, call Fitch at 406-258-3023 or email lfitch@missoulacounty.us.

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The Missoula Forum for Children and Youth is a Missoula City-County Health Department program that works to prevent underage substance abuse in Missoula County through the coordination of coalitions that organize and implement communitywide projects to provide early childhood support, promote positive healthy choices for young people and carry out environmental strategies to prevent underage substance abuse.