

Missoula County Media Release

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Residents Encouraged to Dispose of 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 Prescription Drug Take Back.

People can drop off pills, with or without the bottles, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 27, by the clock tower at Southgate Mall — no questions asked. The Missoula Prescription Drug Task Force, coordinated by the Substance Abuse Prevention Program at the Missoula City-County Health Department, co-hosts these events twice a year to help reduce the harm caused by prescription drug misuse and accidental poisonings. This weekend's event is held in conjunction with the Drug Enforcement Administration's National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day.

Properly disposing of medications is important for many reasons, including keeping waterways and drinking water safe. The World Health Organization has identified pharmaceuticals as chemicals of emerging concern to the public because of their potential to reach drinking water.

"Pharmaceuticals can enter our local waters through three main ways: after excretion by those who consume the drugs, by discarding drugs into toilets and from storm water runoff from livestock manure," said Todd Seib, environmental health specialist at the Missoula City-County Health Department. "Disposing of medications properly helps keep our water safe from contamination."

In addition, 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 5 or 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 to properly dispose of any unused or expired medications at the event this weekend. For those who can't make it, Missoula County also has 13 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 <http://missoula.co/rxtaskforce>.

For more information, call Leah Fitch, substance abuse prevention coordinator, at 406-258-3023 or email lfitch@missoulacounty.us.

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**Rx Drug
Task Force**



The Missoula Prescription Drug Task Force is a coalition of local agencies that uses a multi-pronged approach to educate community members about the potential dangers of prescription drugs, including accidental poisoning of young children, high rates of prescription medication abuse among young adults and the importance of proper medication disposal.