

Prescription Drug Takeback Boxes

Most people have an area in their home where they keep medications on hand. In general, some mild painkillers like Tylenol, some Benadryl, and some types of sinus medication are typical on-hand types of medicines. In addition to these over-the-counter medicines, this also becomes home to medicines we have been prescribed but didn't use up. Things like painkillers for the broken leg a few years back or that blood pressure medicine that made you feel lousy so you stopped taking it. We stash them away in our medical stash and forget about them until the next time we go to look for one of our over-the-counter medicines. We don't really feel comfortable using them again and most of them are expired anyway. What you do with these medicines is of particular importance to us at the Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority. You see there are two main disposal concerns when it comes to prescription drugs: 1. Children, adults, or pets in your home accidentally or intentionally ingest, touch, misuse, or abuse a medication 2. The medication makes its way to the environment and ends up in our surface waters. Depending on which government agency you talk to depends on which one of these concerns they are more vocal about. FDA and the Cherokee Multi-Agency Narcotics Squad (CMANS) are most concerned about the first concern, whereas organizations that are concerned with drinking water and the environment are concerned about the second. Let's evaluate your options for disposal and discuss the pros and cons to each.

For starters, you could throw it in the trash. That's safe, right? It fixes your accumulation problem but now it is going to the landfill. Once there it accumulates space and once the outer plastic breaks down the medicine inside presents the opportunity to get into surface water or potentially ground water. That is of course assuming someone/something doesn't get it out of the trash and ingest it first. After thinking about this option some more we can see this is not the best option.

What about flushing it down the toilet? It doesn't have the opportunity to be used by unintended users, but it still adversely affects the environment. Our wastewater facilities have the ability to remove organics such as nitrogen and phosphorus from the water as well as destroy pathogenic bacteria from entering receiving streams. They are not set up to remove pharmaceuticals from the water though. Which means it flows right through the plant and ends up in our waterways. So flushing is not a good option either.

The best disposal option for getting rid of unwanted medications is to take them to a pharmaceutical drop box.

These boxes are located in the following places:

- **CVS: 6120 Hickory Flat Hwy. Canton, Ga 30115**
- **CVS: 3785 Sixes Rd. Canton, Ga 30114**
- **Walgreens: 120 Marietta Hwy Canton, Ga 30114**
- **CVS: 1600 Towne Lake Pkwy Woodstock, Ga 30188**
- **CVS: 13933 Alpharetta Hwy Milton, Ga 30004**
- **City of Woodstock City Hall: 12453 Highway 92 Woodstock, GA 30188**

***THIS IS NEW INFORMATION, In the past, the drop-off location was at various police stations and was managed by the Cherokee Multi-Agency Narcotics Squad (CMANS). This is no longer the case.** While the Drug Enforcement Administration offers a Drug Take-Back day on a national basis, the locations listed above offer this service on a routine basis. Citizens (no matter where they live) may drop off prescription drugs at these secure drop boxes. It is recommended that citizens who drop off drugs mark out their name and address prior to depositing prescription bottles in the box. Liquids or Syringes are not accepted in the box.

The next time you find yourself rummaging through your medicine cabinet, take note of the expiration dates, bag up the expired ones, and take them to one of the 6 prescription drug boxes located here in Cherokee County.

*Just as a reminder, if you have a particular topic or question you would like us to address, please send it to ccwsaea@gmail.com.