



Responsible Drug Disposal

Background

Prescription and non-prescription drugs are powerful tools that have helped many people by their ability to affect living organisms. However, this ability can become a problem when unused medicines are released to the environment. Flushing medicines to the sanitary sewer was a common practice for many years. More recently, advanced testing methods have shown that many of these compounds are not destroyed in the wastewater treatment process and are being released to the aquatic environment, affecting fish populations and even ending up in drinking water supplies. Landfill disposal can also result in drug-bearing leachate wastewaters being produced. While there have been no demonstrated effects on humans at the extremely low levels involved, there is general agreement that prevention of release is beneficial.

Across the country, drug take back programs are being operated to try to reduce the amount of material released to the environment. These programs benefit communities by providing safe disposal options for unwanted pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs). Personal care products are over-the counter medicines, vitamins and other items such as soaps or lotions with a pharmaceutical component. Responsible disposal benefits; not only the natural environment, but also seniors, who tend to have the most excess medications, younger people who can be poisoned through accidental ingestion or intentional misuse of other's drugs, and the medical and police communities who respond to misuse.

Disposal Options

Residents of the Dacono-Frederick-Firestone area are now able to dispose of unwanted PPCPs at their local police station. This includes all prescription drugs as well as over the counter medicines or other personal care products. Unwanted items can be brought to the police station during regular business hours and given to a police officer for destruction. Identification must be presented and a receipt will be issued. The individual locations are:

Dacono Police Department	512 Cherry Street	303-833-3095
Frederick Police Department	333 5 th Street	303-833-2468
Firestone Police Department	151 Grant Avenue	303-833-0811

Other options along the Front Range include a State-sponsored pilot drop-off program with information available at <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/hm/medtakeback/index.htm> as well as scheduled drug drop-off days sponsored by cities such as Longmont. For information, see: <http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/pwwu/enviro/rx.htm#event> . For more detailed information, an internet search on "drug disposal" will produce a variety of resources, or you can call the St. Vrain Sanitation District's Pretreatment Program at 303-682-4692 with any questions.