

Treatment Plants Can't Handle Everything

There has been a growing water quality concern with some of the activities we are doing nation-wide. These activities are impacting our streams, groundwater, and also the waste water treatment plants. The good news is these problems are easily preventable.

So, what's the problem?

Dumping medications down the toilet and flushing bathroom wipes.

So, what happens when we do these things?

Medications can get into our drinking water and wipes clog up the treatment plant pipes.

So, how does this happen?

Our wastewater treatment plants do a great job of helping us clean our wastewater—but they are not designed to treat everything we are putting down our toilets. *Medications, chemicals and other types of waste can pass through the system untreated and be discharged back to the receiving stream.*

The wet wipes we use in the bathroom have been known to clog treatment plant operations and have become an expensive issue. The extra cost in maintenance fees and equipment needed to repair these clogs could be tax dollars saved or go towards plant upgrades.



So, what do we do with them?

Unneeded or expired products such as medications, dietary supplements and personal care products are best disposed of by landfilling. Here's how...

- NEVER flush medications or personal care products down the toilet or pour down the drain
- Call your pharmacy or police department to see if they have a “medication take-back program”, or know where one is that you can go to
- If no programs exist, alter liquid medications by mixing them into a paste with flour or kitty litter and put in trash
- Partially dissolve capsules in a small amount of water to make them indigestible and then put in trash
- If there is no threat of ingestion by others, leave products in their original containers to reduce any leaking, and rip off or mark out label for privacy before throwing away
- Avoid buying unnecessary ingredients in personal care products such as scents or those labeled antimicrobial
- Use personal care products according to label recommendations, as well as sparingly and completely
- NEVER flush bathroom wipes down the toilet - *even if they say “flushable”*
- ALWAYS put bathroom wipes in the trash can

For more information visit

- www.groundwater.org
- NACWA.org
- USEPA—net search (pharmaceuticals in water)
- USGS—net search (pharmaceuticals in water)