

## PROTECTING OUR SOLE SOURCE AQUIFER AND COASTAL EMBAYMENTS



### WHAT IS AN AQUIFER?

A **Sole Source Aquifer** is an underground supply of water designated by the Environmental Protection Agency as the "sole or principal" source of drinking water for an area. We get **ALL of our drinking water** on Cape Cod from our Sole Source Aquifer.

### HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

All uses of water on Cape Cod - whether for drinking, swimming, boating, shellfishing, cranberry farming, or wetland habitat - **depend on the health and quality of our aquifer.** Cape Cod's Sole Source Aquifer is directly affected by everything that goes down your drain, **including expired or unwanted medications.**

### For More Information Regarding Safe Medications and Prescriptions Disposal

- Visit [www.capecodextension.org](http://www.capecodextension.org)
- Visit [www.capecodgroundwater.org](http://www.capecodgroundwater.org)
- Visit [www.smarxtdisposal.net](http://www.smarxtdisposal.net)

Unwanted medications can also be disposed of in the free, anonymous drop boxes located in Cape Cod police department lobbies (excluding the Town of Barnstable). The DEA holds drug-take back programs in April and October. Check the DEA website for additional details:  
[www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/)

PATIENTS SHOULD ALWAYS REFER TO PRINTED MATERIAL ACCOMPANYING THEIR MEDICATION FOR SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS.

### CAPE COD COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

(800) 319-2783 (508) 375-6699

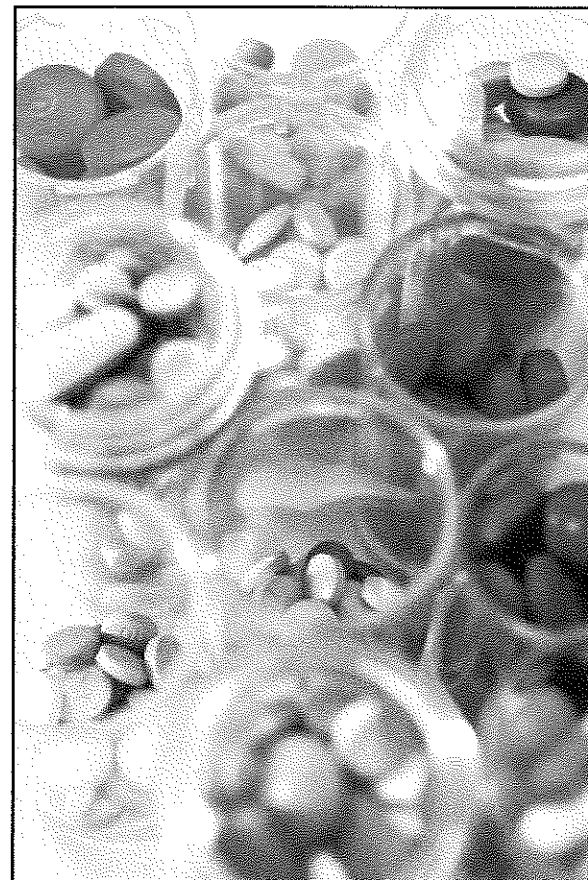
[www.capecodextension.org](http://www.capecodextension.org)



*Cape Cod Cooperative Extension: Barnstable County, UMASS Extension, and USDA cooperating. Barnstable County and UMASS Extension are equal opportunity providers and employers.*

## Think Twice About **UNWANTED MEDICATION DISPOSAL**

*A Guide to Safe Disposal of  
Medications and Prescriptions*



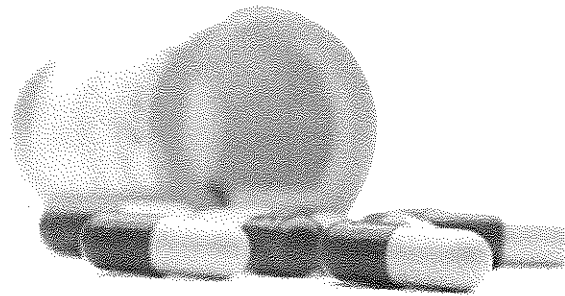
## THE PROBLEM WITH FLUSHING MEDICATIONS



When you flush medications down the toilet or pour them down the drain, they flow into the Cape Cod community's underground source of fresh drinking water which replenishes our lakes, ponds, rivers. Coastal waters are affected by medications and can harm our populations of local fish and wildlife.

**M**edications that are flushed down the toilet can and do find their way into our nation's waterways every day. Those drugs are present in water that supports many species of fish and other wildlife.

- H. Dale Hall, Former Director,  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



## Four Safe Steps Toward PROPER DISPOSAL

- 1 Pour medication into a sealable plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), crush it or add water to dissolve it.
- 2 Add cat litter, sawdust, coffee grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for pets and children to eat) to the plastic bag.
- 3 Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash.
- 4 Remove and destroy ALL identifying personal information (prescription label) from all medication containers before recycling them or throwing them into the trash.

*Patients should ALWAYS refer to printed material accompanying their medication for specific instructions.*

### DO NOT...

- ...flush medication down the toilet!
- ...pour medication down a sink or drain!

*WHY DOESN'T BARNSTABLE COUNTY COLLECT THESE MEDICATIONS AT AN OFFICIAL PLACE OR TIME?*

Due to Federal and State law, collections are costly and complex to arrange and require an on-duty police officer and pharmacist to be on site.

*WHY CAN'T I JUST DUMP PILLS INTO MY KITCHEN TRASH CAN? DO I REALLY NEED TO GO THROUGH ALL THOSE STEPS?*

When pills are thrown directly into the trash, it can lead to unintended exposure to people or animals. People may go through the trash to obtain unused medications or personal information found on discarded prescription bottles. The extra steps provide a safer method for disposing of unused medications.

*WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF MEDICATIONS FOUND IN WATER ON FISH AND WILDLIFE?*

Many pharmaceuticals and their by-products have been detected in waters. Researchers are currently examining the potential effects of these compounds on fish and wildlife. \*Silent Spring Institute conducted tests of 20 wells and 2 distribution systems on Cape Cod in 2009. 75% of the wells and both systems had detectable levels of pharmaceuticals, primarily coming from septic systems.

Source: SilentSpring.org

