Medication Disposal *Safety Tips*

Keeping YOU *and* your family safe!

Dispose of expired or unwanted prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs safely. NEVER dispose by flushing down the toilet or other drain. Doing this can cause harm to the planet, animals, YOU and your family.

Where can I properly dispose of my unused medications?

Check to see if there are any drug take-back programs near you. If there is not a program near you, follow the steps in the Staying Safe box on the right to dispose of unwanted drugs.

Why do I need to properly dispose of my unused medications?

It isn't safe to flush drugs down drains or throw them out in the trash. Drugs flushed down drains can harm the water supply that we drink, and wildlife. Dispose of drugs the right way to prevent someone taking them by accident, or through an illegal sale. Protect children and pets from harm caused by accidental ingestion.

Who can I talk to if I am unsure about how to properly dispose of my unused medications?

Ask your VA pharmacist how to safely dispose of your medications.

Staying Safe

How can I stay safe when disposing of unused medicines?

- **Keep prescriptions in the original container. This will help identify the contents if they are accidentally ingested.**
- **Before disposing, mark out your name and prescription number on the label for safety.**
- **Add some water or soda to pills to start dissolving them. Mix pills or liquid drugs with something that you cannot eat, like cat litter or dirt.**
- **Close the lid and secure with duct or packing tape.**
- **Place the bottle(s) inside a non-see through container like a coffee can or detergent bottle.**
- **Tape that container closed.**
- **Hide the container in the trash. Do not put in the recycle bin.**

**Due to the high risk for harm, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends flushing for certain potent pain medications. A list of these medications can be found by going to the FDA's website (www.fda.gov) and searching for "Disposal by Flushing"

YOU can also help...

Prevent drug misuse, abuse, and accidental poisonings.

Make a difference by following these

DO's & DON'Ts:

- DO keep medications in the original container and out of sight and reach of children and pets.
- DO store your medications in a secure area. Consider a cabinet or drawer that you can lock.
- DO check the date on everything in your medicine cabinet and dispose of anything that has passed the expiration date.
- DO check to see which medications need to be refrigerated. Make sure they are stored where they will not freeze and where children cannot easily reach them.

- DON'T take medications in front of children, since they tend to mimic adults.
- DON'T give your medications to others to or take someone else's medications.
- DON'T put different medications into one bottle.
- DON'T store medications in places that are hot and humid.
- DON'T take a medication that looks different (i.e. color, shape, size, etc.) than you are accustomed to without first checking with your pharmacist.

and remember!

Proper disposal of medications will keep you, your family, your pets and the environment safe! It will also keep medications from being diverted and used illegally.