

What is Take Back Your Meds?

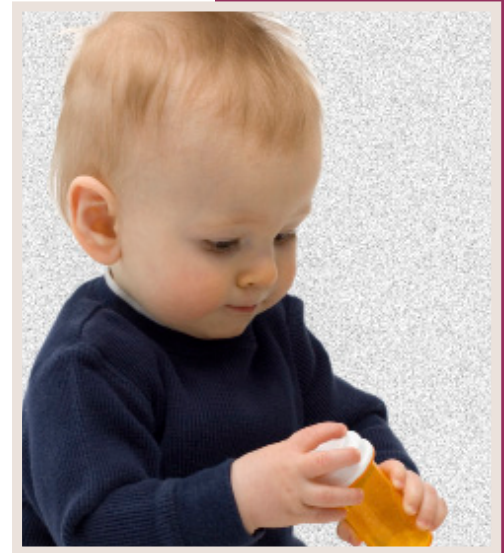
We are a group of health organizations, environmental groups, police, drugstores, and others demanding a statewide program for the safe return and disposal of left-over medicines.

- Safe means a secure and convenient system where residents can return leftover medications – throughout Washington.
- Safe also means the proper disposal of what are essentially toxic leftovers – and the only proven method is through high-temperature incineration.

Leftover medications are a threat to us all.

Why? Because unused, leftover drugs are endangering our children, our families and going into the water supply threatening our health and the environment.

- Emergency room visits involving nonmedical use of narcotic pain relievers rose 111% from 2004 to 2008. (Drug Abuse Warning Network)
- Fatal poisonings in Washington State increased 395% from 1990 to 2006. (WA DOH)
- 85% of poisoning deaths involved medicines in 2006. (WA DOH)
- 32% of child poisoning deaths in Washington were caused by someone else's prescription medication and 26% were caused by over-the-counter medications. (WA DOH)
- Three fifths (57%) of all new prescription drug abusers were younger than age 18 in 2009. Over 20% of high school students have taken medicine for a non medical reason. (National Survey on Drug Use and Health)
- Our medicine cabinets provide teens with easy access to drugs - more than three out of five teens say prescription pain relievers are easy to get from parents' and grandparents' medicine cabinets and half of teens say prescription medications are easy to get through other people's prescriptions. (WA DOH)
- Drug overdoses in Washington have surpassed car crashes as the leading cause of accidental deaths. The majority of these overdoses involved prescription opiates. (WA DOH)



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- Of 139 streams sampled throughout the U.S., 80% tested positive for pharmaceutical drug contamination. (USGS)
- Researchers have found drugs like painkillers, antihistamines, antibiotics, heart medications and hormones in surface, ground and marine waters as well as soils and sediments in the Pacific Northwest. (multiple studies, see more info at www.takebackyourmeds.org/why/medicines-in-the-environment)
- A wide range of medicines have been found in the drinking water of 24 major metropolitan cities. (AP Investigation)



It's time for drug companies to do what's right!

Without proper disposal, unwanted and leftover medicines are potentially dangerous and at risk of becoming toxic waste. It's time for the drug companies that make and sell medicines to provide a sustainable statewide program for the safe return and disposal of unwanted medicines, just as they do in other countries.

- Drug companies generated over \$4 billion in sales in Washington State alone last year. (State Health Facts)
- These same companies spent \$450 million promoting sales of medicines in Washington in 2008. (Congressional Budget Office)
- Providing a safe and sustainable take-back program would cost the drug companies a couple of pennies per container of medicine sold in our state.



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Learn More... Washington's Secure Medicine Take-Back Bill SB5234/HB1370 at www.takebackyourmeds.org/make-it-happen/proposed-state-law