



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

*“To protect and improve
the health and environment
of the people of Colorado.”*

FACT SHEET

4300 Cherry Creek Drive South,
Denver, CO 80246 303-692-2021

Take-Back Program for Unwanted Medicines

Medication take-back programs offer a way to keep unwanted medicines out of the wrong hands while protecting the environment.

Proper and Improper Disposal of Unwanted Medicines

The detection of trace amounts of medications in wastewater treatment plant effluents and drinking water supplies has raised concerns about potential impacts to ecosystems and human health. Although some of this pollution is caused by metabolized medicines in human and animal waste, a significant portion comes from flushing unwanted drugs and over-the-counter medications. Unwanted medicines kept in the home also may fall into the hands of children or drug abusers.

People without access to a take-back program or local collection events should avoid flushing medicine down the drain or toilet. Instead, unwanted medicine should be mixed with kitty litter or coffee grounds to make it unusable, and discarded in the household trash.

The Pilot Program

Tamper-resistant collection boxes available at several Denver metro-area locations are intended for prescription medications and over-the-counter products, but cannot accept narcotics, controlled substances or medications from clinics, hospitals or nursing homes. A guidebook attached to each box will explain which products can be deposited. To prevent theft, each box requires two keys, and the contents will be immediately destroyed upon collection to render them unusable. The residual waste materials will be incinerated at a facility licensed to handle medical waste. The two-year pilot program will provide state regulators with data needed to determine if a state-wide program is feasible.

Accepted: Prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, medication samples, medications for pets, vitamins, medicated ointments/lotions, inhalers, liquid medication in glass or leak-proof containers.

Not Accepted: Needles, thermometers, narcotics and other controlled substances, IV bags, bloody or infectious waste, personal care products, business waste, empty containers, hydrogen peroxide, aerosol cans, plastic bags.

Locations

Aurora

- King Soopers, 4271 S. Buckley Rd.

Boulder

- King Soopers, 1650 30th St.

Breckenridge

- City Market, 400 N. Parkway

Commerce City

- Tri-County Health Department, Suite D, 4201 E. 72nd Ave.

Denver

- King Soopers, 2810 Quebec St.
- Denver Health, Wellington E. Webb Center for Primary Care, 301 W. 6th Ave.

Dillon

- City Market, 300 Dillon Ridge Rd.

Englewood

- Tri-County Health Department, 4857 S. Broadway

Highlands Ranch

- King Soopers, 9551 S. University Blvd.

Wheat Ridge

- King Soopers, 3400 Youngfield St.

Sponsors

The program is coordinated by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, with funding and other support from:

- Pollution Prevention Advisory Board
- King Soopers and City Market
- Tri-County Health Department
- Denver Health at Denver Public Health
- EPA Region 8
- Denver Water
- Greenprint Denver
- Summit Water Quality Committee
- High Country Conservation Center
- Colorado Pharmacists Society
- Peer Assistance Services
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America
- Rotary of Evergreen

- Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority
- Metro Wastewater Reclamation District
- Town of Castle Rock

Contacts

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Please feel free to contact any of the other sponsoring organizations for comments about their participation.