

What you should know:

1. **Should you return medications to your pharmacy?** Yes, in British Columbia we have a *Medications Return Program* where 90% of pharmacies take back unused or expired medications. This is the best option, call your local drugstore or pharmacy to confirm their participation or check this website.
2. **Should you flush them down the toilet?** No, I know we all have done it. Experts say however, this method may have potential harmful effects on the environment. Disposal via the toilet will take your drugs into the local sewage system. Modern water treatment plants are not fully designed to deal with medication disposal.
2. **Should you pour them down the sink?** This is no better than flushing them down the toilet. They still end up in the same place. It's even worse if your home uses a septic system. Experts say drugs can leach into the local water table, eventually coming out somewhere, like a nearby lake or stream, or even worse out onto your own property, where pets, livestock or wildlife could be at risk.
3. **Should you throw them into the trash?** Safety experts strongly discourage throwing them into the trash where children or pets can find them. Your trash will eventually make it to a local landfill, where your medications could still have the potential to leach out. Many municipal or regional districts have local household waste facilities where you can safely drop off your medications for disposal. Check in your region for more information.
4. **Should you return them to your doctor?** No, however the pharmacy located near your doctor's office will probably take medications. Call ahead to see if your pharmacy offers safe medications disposal methods.

Tips:

1. Consider all your options for safer, environmentally-responsible disposal of your unused medications.
2. When you explore safer options expect to hear "Why don't you just flush them down the toilet?" Just because this method is still common practice does not make it the most responsible or safest practice.
3. Keep in mind, proper medication disposal is available in your province ask your pharmacist to register with the *Medications Return Program*.

What You Need:

- A little persistence, preparation and planning