

Monterey County Herald
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Letters to the Editor

Don't flush your unused medications

Recent reports of trace levels of pharmaceutical compounds in our drinking water supplies have raised awareness of water quality protection. Residents can help by properly disposing their old medications. State and federal agencies are recommending that medical wastes NOT be flushed down the toilet as misadvised by Dr. Peter Gott in his May 29 column.

The federal office of National Drug Control Policy recommends not flushing prescription drugs. I'm general manager of the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency, which agrees with the Monterey Regional Waste Management District and county Health Department agree that the best solution is to take unused/expired medications back to a participating local pharmacy. If your pharmacy is not participating in a "take-back" program, pharmaceuticals can be safely disposed of through the household hazardous waste program at the landfill.

Our agencies will be participating in a public education and outreach program this year sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and State Water Resources Control Board to "keep drugs out of the drains." You can find more information about the program at www.nodrugsdownthedrain.org.

Keith Israel
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