

Protecting Groundwater from Medical Waste



Information about how you can help protect our drinking water supply from medical waste.

THE PROBLEM

You've probably heard about in the news. Waterways and water supply areas (both public and private wells) everywhere have shown signs of contamination by hormones and other medications. The amounts are tiny, measured in parts per billion or trillion, however, we don't know how these small concentrations may be affecting our bodies and especially the bodies of children who's bodies react much differently to substances than adults. They can also cause mutations in wildlife. The federal government currently does not require testing, nor has it set safety limits for drugs in drinking water. Sewage treatment plants do not have the capability of removing these toxins during the treatment process and they are discharged into our waterways in treated water.

How did these contaminants get into our water? They can be passed through our bodies into wastewater systems, and people also dump leftover or out-of-date medications down their drains. They can also come from farms where animals have been treated with medications and from other veterinary drugs used on our pets. When you have an on-lot septic tank, residue can be simply passed right into the ground and into the on-lot water supply. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is now calling pharmaceutical levels in sewage treatment plants an "emerging toxin of great concern."

SOLUTIONS

BEFORE getting a medication:

- Ask your doctor if there might be a medication for you that is low in environmental impact
- Ask your doctor for smaller prescription amounts with refill options if needed
- Commit to health prevention strategies that will reduce the need for medication

When medications are left over or expired:

At this time, a few counties including Butler County have finally been permitted by the State to hold one-day collections for the proper dis-

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Recycling & Waste
Management**

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Protect Your Water for Life

Board of Butler County Commissioners

Leslie A. Osche, Chairman
Kimberly D. Geyer, Vice-
Chairman
Kevin E. Boozel, Secretary

posal of pharmaceuticals along with the help of law enforcement.



- Take unused medications to a State-permitted medication collection event. The Butler County Department of Recycling & Waste Management now offers these! Call us for more information on the next collection.

GET INVOLVED

Help solve the legal problems that prohibit pharmacies from being permitted to take back old and unused medications.

Contact your local political representatives and urge them to help solve this problem.

THANK YOU FOR DOING YOUR PART!

Help us keep water supply clean by doing your part to reduce water contamination.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Search on the internet for the terms "pharmaceuticals" and "drinking water"
- Call the Butler County Department of Recycling and Waste Management at (724) 284-5305
- Call the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection at (814) 332-6848



Monday, March 31, 2008

**DEP, US Geological Survey Test Pittsburgh Water for
Pharmaceuticals**



PITTSBURGH — The state Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Geological Survey will test Pittsburgh's waterways for pharmaceuticals and hormone contaminants.

The testing will begin this summer. It comes in the wake of an Associated Press investigation that revealed the presence of such contaminants in a great deal of the nation's drinking water. Its impact on human health is unclear, but there is growing concern among experts.

Researchers will sample 27 streams, rivers and lakes in Pennsylvania, including the Allegheny River, which provides drinking water to Pittsburgh. The testing will be done over three years.

Source: AP