



How Healthy Is Your Medicine Cabinet?

Despite good intentions, unfinished prescriptions and expired over-the-counter drugs clog our home medicine cabinets. At Simplicity, we suggest an annual inventory and purging. Almost everything is now stamped with an expiration date. If no date is found, but you've had the medicine for longer than you can remember or have no idea what it is used to treat, it should be discarded. Better safe than sorry.

Make a shopping list for first aid products and OTC medicines that need to be replaced. Be sure to store all medicines in a secure location away from inquisitive little hands.

The old practice of flushing all expired meds down the toilet has fallen from favor because of degradation of our drinking water supply. So how should you discard expired or unwanted medicines? One easy way is to take advantage of a locally sponsored "medicine drop".

In Charlotte, such a program* called "Drug Drop Off" is being offered on Saturday, March 28, 2009, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at seven area Harris-Teeter locations: Southpark, Stonecrest, Old Towne Mall, Arboretum, Park Road Shopping Center, Steelescrot Shopping Center and Cochran Commons.

So now is a great time to sort and purge to take advantage of the upcoming "medicine drop". And, while you're at it, consider a review of your family's medical records to be sure everything is accurate and up-to-date.

For more information, visit www.dea.gov.

*Operation Medicine Drop (Drug Drop Off) event details

Please join Chief Rodney Monroe with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, Assistant Special Agent in Charge John Emerson with the Drug Enforcement Administration and Special Agent in Charge James Bowman with the State Bureau of Investigation's Diversion & Environmental Crimes Unit, as they discuss plans for a weekend "drug drop off" at area Harris Teeter stores. The press conference will take place at police headquarters on Thursday, March 26, 2009, at 4 o'clock p.m.

The event itself will take place on Saturday, March 28, 2009, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., at seven Harris Teeter locations within Mecklenburg County. The purpose

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of the event is to provide members of the community a drop off location for any unused or outdated prescription medicine that they wish to discard.

Listed below are the sponsoring Harris-Teeter Stores:

- Southpark - 6701 Morrison Blvd.
- Stonecrest - 7852 Rea Road
- Steelcroft Shopping Center, 13000 South Tryon Street
- Arboretum - 3333 Pineville-Matthews Road
- Park Road Shopping Center - 4101 Park Road
- Old Towne Mall, 4100 Carmel Road
- Cochran Commons - 2720 W. Mallard Creek Church Road

With the misuse of prescription drugs second only to marijuana as the Nation's most prevalent drug problem, the annual average number of people using pain relievers non-medically for the first time exceeds the number of new marijuana users, according to a recent study released by SAMHSA. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

More than 2.2 million youth in the United States aged 12 to 17 used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons in the past year to self-treat physical or mental distress, improve appearance or performance, catch an energy wave, or simply mellow out. 70% of teens who abuse prescription drugs admit to easily obtaining the drugs for free, primarily from friends and relatives.

The prescription drugs most abused by teens are "opioid" pain relievers such as Darvon, Dilaudid, OxyContin, Vicodin, and products containing codeine or morphine. Teen abuse of prescription drugs also includes sedatives, tranquilizers, and stimulants such as Ritalin, Concerta, and Adderall, which are known for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. (ADHD)

Every day, 2,500 kids age 12 to 17 abuse a prescription painkiller for the first time. Drug treatment admissions for prescription painkillers increased more than 300 percent from 1995 to 2005.