

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RICHMOND, B.C. – APRIL 6, 2015 – Whenever we get sick, or feel pain, we find ourselves returning to our medicine cabinets in search of relief in the form of cough medicine, nasal sprays, pain relief and much more. But when was the last time you checked the expiration date of these remedies hiding in your medicine cabinet? And when medication is expired, how do you dispose of it? Taking expired medication could be harmful to your health and throwing out expired medication can be harmful to the environment.

Properly disposing expired prescription drugs is important for a number of reasons, including the safety of your loved ones and the well being of the environment. Many prescription medications, over-the-counter products and health supplements remain in medicine cabinets and kitchen drawers long after their expiry date, while others are simply unused. At some point in time, they are thrown away in the garbage, flushed down the toilet, or—in the case of liquids—poured down the drain.

Medications disposed of in the garbage can [pose a hazard to pets and wildlife](#), and these, as well as drugs flushed down sinks or toilets, can infiltrate groundwater, eventually entering drinking water and the food chain. The rainwater that collects at the bottom of landfills has been shown to contain antidepressants, antibiotics, steroids, hormones, heart and asthma medications and painkillers. The contaminated water negatively affects aquatic organisms, fish and other wildlife.

What can you do? Return unused or expired medications to London Drugs

Saturday, May 9 is [National Prescription Drug Drop-off Day](#), and London Drugs encourages Western Canadians to drop off their unused or expired prescription drugs to their local pharmacy.

London Drugs pharmacists have long recognized the importance of properly disposing of drugs, needles and other medicine-related supplies. We have initiated several programs to cut down on environmental waste through recycling of medication-related materials in a safe manner:

[Medication Returns Program](#): We accept expired or unused medications for safe disposal. These medications are safely incinerated, preventing them from entering landfills, sewers and the environment at large. We request that, whenever possible, you remove drugs from their packaging, and recycle the packaging appropriately, before bringing medications to the pharmacy for disposal.

[Recycling of vials, bottles and lids](#): If you are unable to recycle your lids, bottles and/or medication vials, or you prefer to return unused or expired medications in their original packaging, we will happily recycle them for you.

[Diabetic Needle Disposal Program](#): With the purchase of 100 BD syringes or pen needles, you will receive a [certified biohazard needle disposal container](#) free of charge. (If you are not buying needles, you may still purchase a container for a nominal charge.) Filled containers may be returned to a London Drugs pharmacy and we will dispose of the contents in a way that is safe for the public and the environment.

Disposing of expired medication should be treated with caution as expired medication is considered hazardous waste. The best way to dispose of expired medication is to bring it to a London Drugs Pharmacist who will then put it into the disposal safety container.

Wherever you store your medications, be sure to lock them safely away from children and pets, or place them out of harm's reach on a high shelf in the cupboard. Ideally, medicine cabinets should be checked over once a year.

When doing so, be sure to:

- Dispose of any medication that is 12 months old or older
- Remove any medication not in its original container.
- Remove duplicates of OTC medications, where the older medication is rarely used.

For more information about disposing expired drugs, please visit a Pharmacist at your nearest [London Drugs](#) location or visit online at greendeal.ca/medication-disposal

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About London Drugs

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs currently has 79 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 7,000 people and carries a diverse range of health and consumer electronic products. With its strong commitment to innovation and customer appreciation, London Drugs has established itself as a reputable and caring company and continues to position itself for future growth and development.