

Eskenazi Health Pharmacy locations collect dangerous unwanted medications

Do you have prescription or over-the-counter medications that are expired or that you just don't need anymore? Pharmacies at 10 Eskenazi Health sites now accept unwanted prescription drugs through a partnership with the [Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program](#) and the [Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force](#).

Yellow Jug Old Drugs is a free program that collects and properly disposes of unwanted/unused drugs in a safe and approved manner to help keep our community's water clean.

"Eskenazi Health has been interested in developing an unwanted medications take-back program for our community due to concerns for both the environment and the prescription drug abuse epidemic," said Jim Young, quality assurance/regulatory pharmacist at Eskenazi Health. "The Great Lakes Clean Water/US Clean Water group has developed a well-designed program to help us safely take back unwanted medications and dispose of them appropriately."

Young said many people who have old or unwanted medications flush them down the toilet or drain. Disposing of medications down a toilet or drain can cause pollution in wastewater.

The Eskenazi Health Pharmacy Outpatient Care Center, located on the first floor of the Sidney & Lois Eskenazi Hospital, 720 Eskenazi Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46202, or any pharmacy located at an Eskenazi Health Center site will accept unwanted/unused drugs.

Items accepted with the Yellow Drug Old Drugs Program include:

- Controlled drugs schedule II-V
 - Prescription drugs
 - Over-the-counter drugs
 - Transdermal patches
 - Liquids and ointments
 - Sodium bicarbonate or effervescent (must be dissolved first in water)
- Items that cannot be accepted include:
- Hazardous materials
 - Hazardous pharmaceuticals
 - Medical waste/infectious waste
 - Sharps/needles/syringes
 - Drugs or waste from hospitals/health facilities
 - Radioactive items
 - Ignitable materials
 - Aerosols

The state-wide program is being funded by a grant from Eli Lilly and Company. It is a program under the Great Lakes Clean Water/US Clean Water organization that provides prescription drug disposal services to pharmacies, so that members of the public can turn in unused medications for safe disposal and avert potential misuse.

An estimated 46 Americans die each day from prescription drug overdose, and more than six million people suffer from prescription drug abuse disorders in the U.S. Three out of four heroin users say they started out abusing prescription drugs. Prescription drug abuse affects people of every age, race, gender and socio-economic status.

“This type of collaboration - among government, nonprofit, the medical community and now the pharmaceutical industry - is exactly what we need in the fight to reduce controlled substance abuse in Indiana,” said Greg Zoeller, Indiana Attorney General and creator and co-chair of the Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force. “Urging proper and frequent disposal of prescription medications is critical to getting old, unused drugs out of home medicine cabinets where they are ripe for abuse. We know that a majority of prescription drug abusers obtain the drugs from family members or friends, so getting people to dispose of these medications before they lead to abuse can have a major impact.”