



# SAFE MEDS

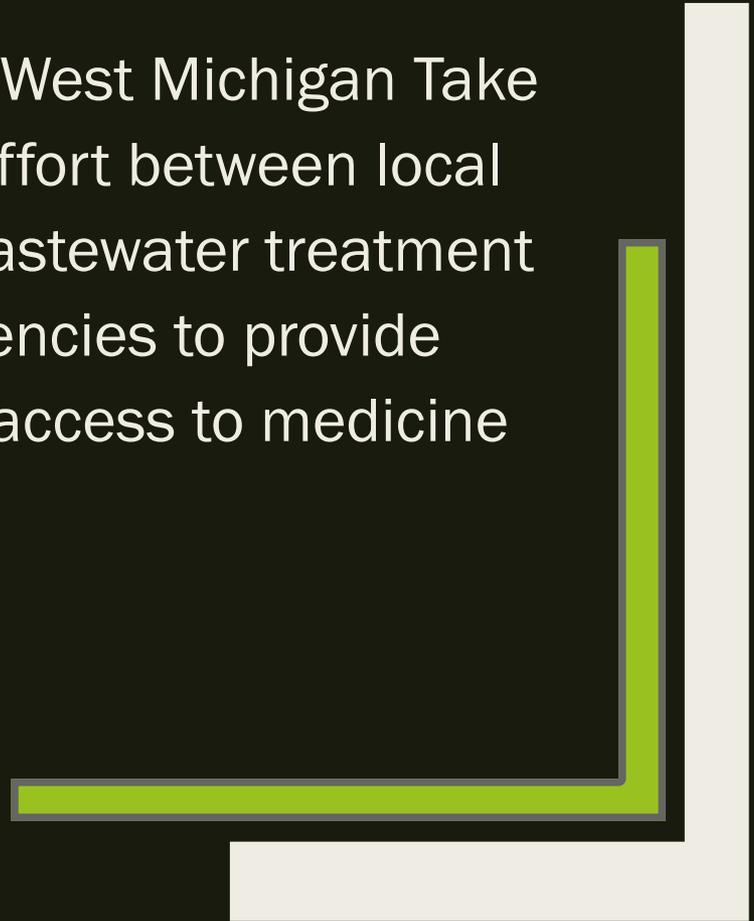
A guide to proper disposal of  
prescription and over-the-counter  
medicines.



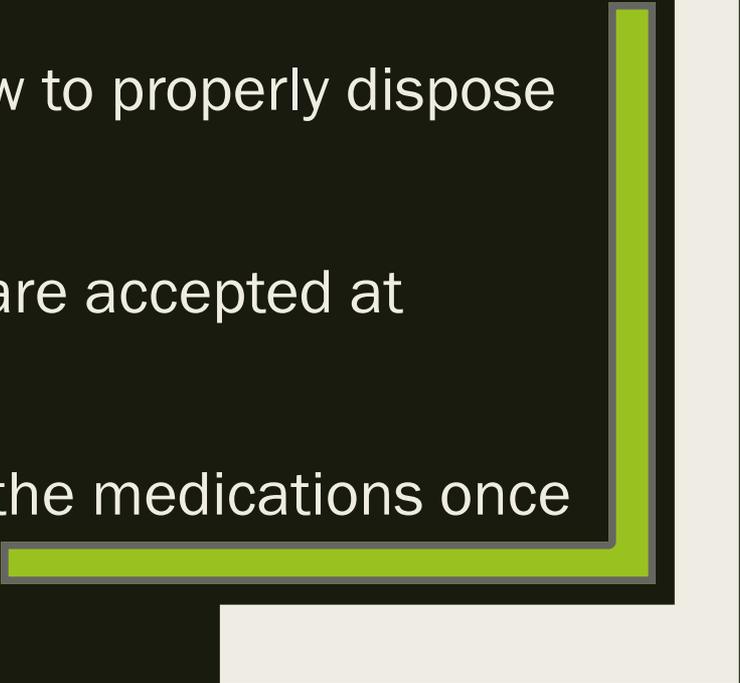
**KENT COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC WORKS**

# Safe Disposal for Safer Homes

The **SafeMeds Program**, formally West Michigan Take Back Meds Program, is a joint effort between local pharmacies, law enforcement, wastewater treatment facilities, and government agencies to provide residents with safe, convenient access to medicine disposal.

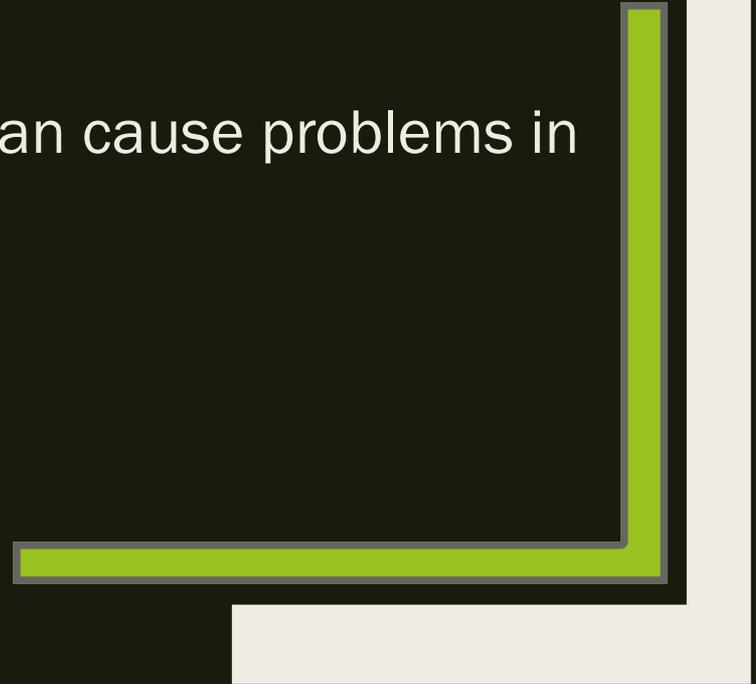


# Presentation Goals

- To increase awareness of the problems caused by improperly disposed of medications.
  - To provide information on how to properly dispose of medications.
  - To share which medications are accepted at disposal sites.
  - To share what happens with the medications once collected.
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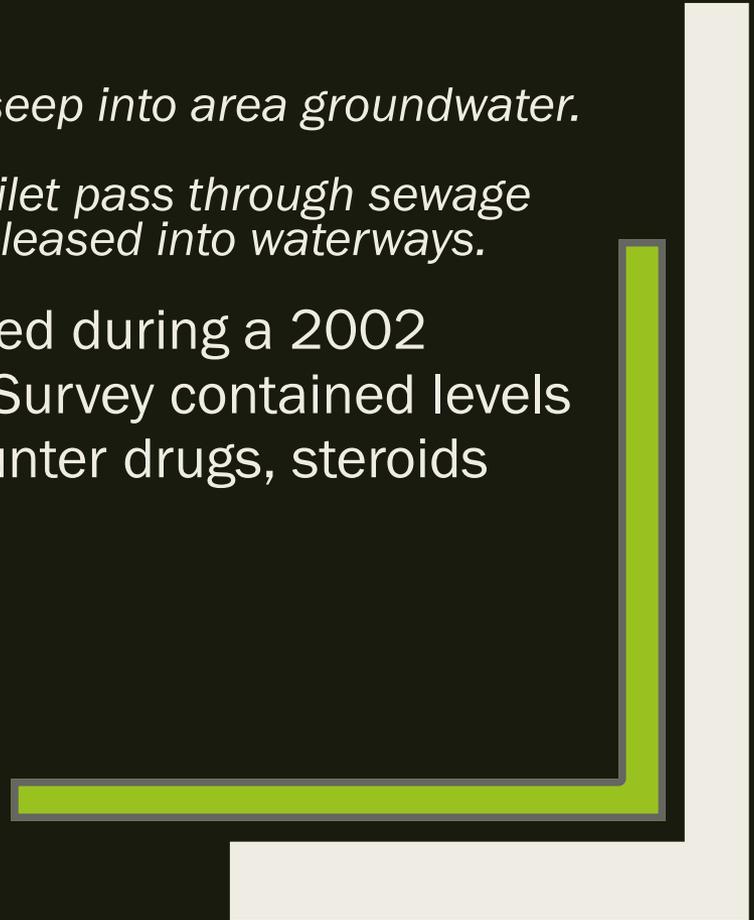
# Why the Concern?

- Most everyone takes medications (prescription, vitamins, cold & flu) at some point in their life.
- 20% - 60% of prescription medications go unused.
- Many of these medications can cause problems in humans and animals.



# Why the Concern?

- Most of our unused medications end up in landfills or waterways.
- *Medications in our landfills can seep into area groundwater.*
- *Medications flushed down the toilet pass through sewage treatment plants and then are released into waterways.*
- 80% of national waterways tested during a 2002 analysis by the U.S. Geological Survey contained levels of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, steroids and reproductive hormones.



# Why the Concern?



- Unused, unwanted and expired medications can lead to unintentional poisonings of children and pets.
  - *Over 1 million children are accidentally poisoned by taking medicines each year.*
  - *Pets can get into medicines that are left out or even placed in the trash.*
- The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center handled nearly 285,000 pet poisoning calls related to prescription and over-the-counter medicines in 2016 alone. This doesn't include instances where pets were taken directly to their veterinarian.  
~ ASPCA 2016 Annual Report



# Why the Concern?

- The abuse of prescription drugs is a fast-growing problem, especially with teens and young adults.
- Because prescription drugs are legal, they are easy to get, often from home medicine cabinets.
- Most teenagers who abuse prescription drugs get them from free from a friend or relative.
- Many who abuse these drugs incorrectly think they are safer than illegal drugs.



# What Can Be Done?

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- Secure: store medicines in places out of reach & sight of children and pets.

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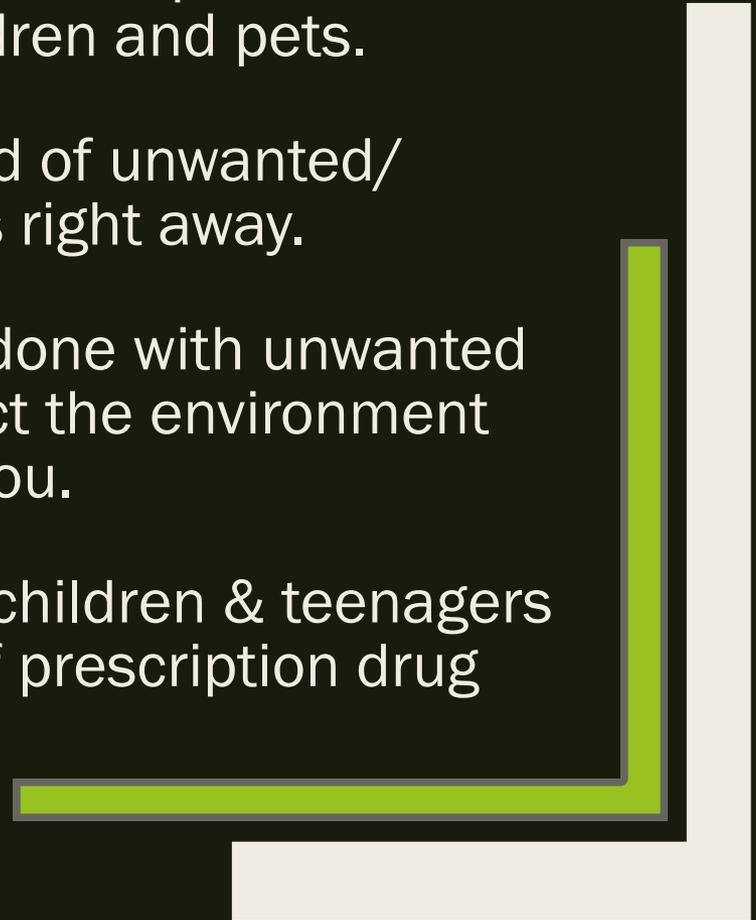
- Action: actively get rid of unwanted/unnecessary medicines right away.

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- Facts: know what is done with unwanted medicines can impact the environment and people around you.

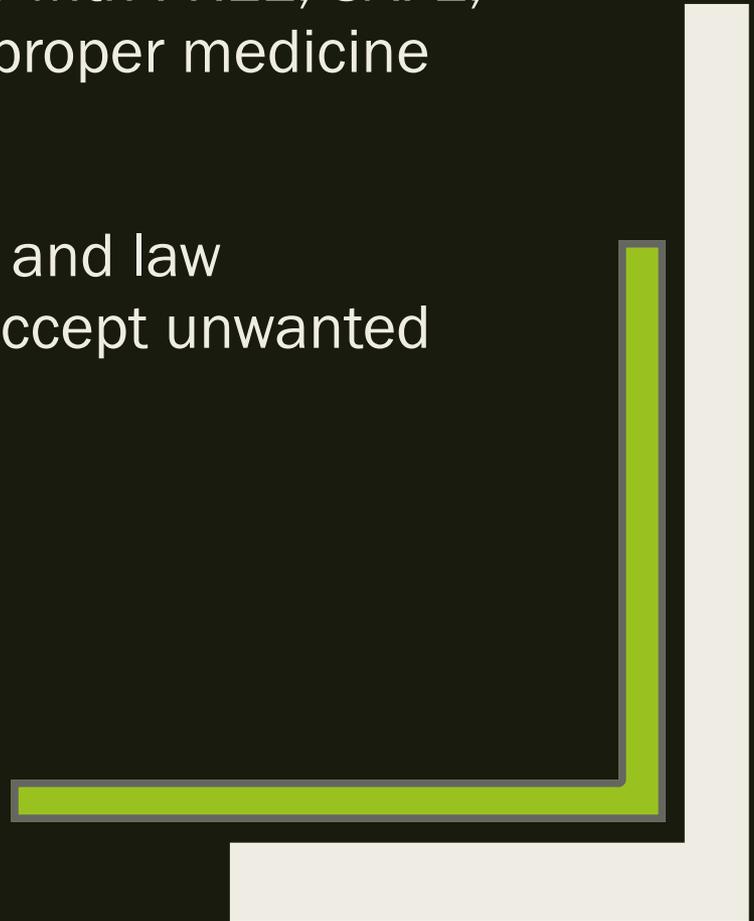
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- Educate: teach your children & teenagers about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.



# The Right Way to Disposal

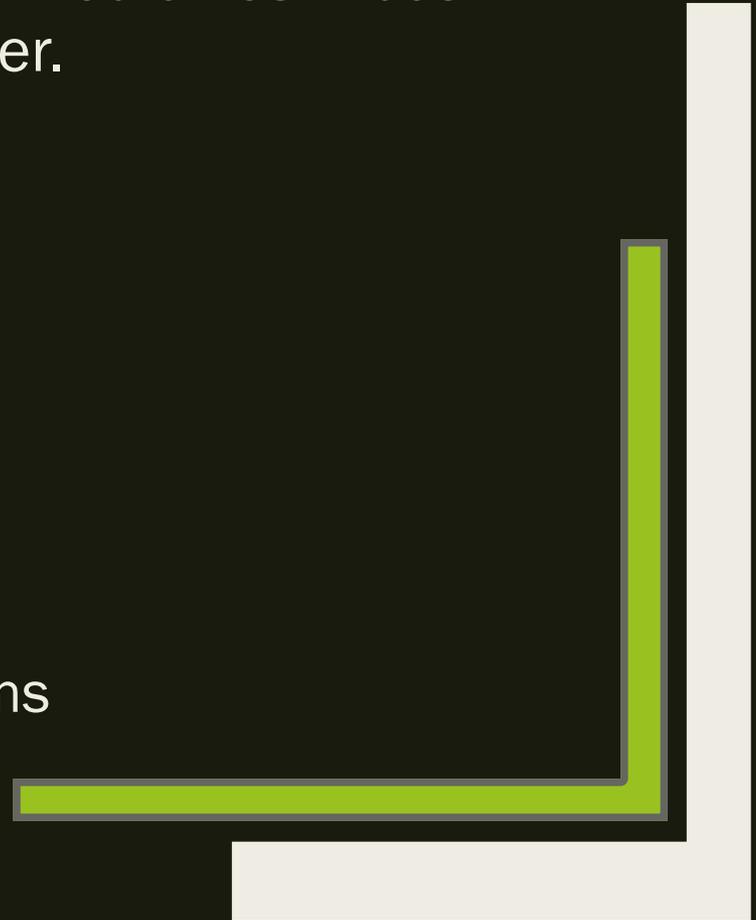
- SafeMeds provides residents with FREE, SAFE, and CONVIENENT access to proper medicine disposal.
- Network of local pharmacies and law enforcement agencies that accept unwanted medicines.



# Step 1

Gather all unwanted household medicines – both prescription and over-the-counter.

- Prescriptions
- Cold & flu meds
- Vitamins & supplements
- Pet medications
- Medicated ointments/ lotions



## Step 2

Keep medications in their original containers but *block out all personal information* on the label.

- Do not remove the name of the medication!

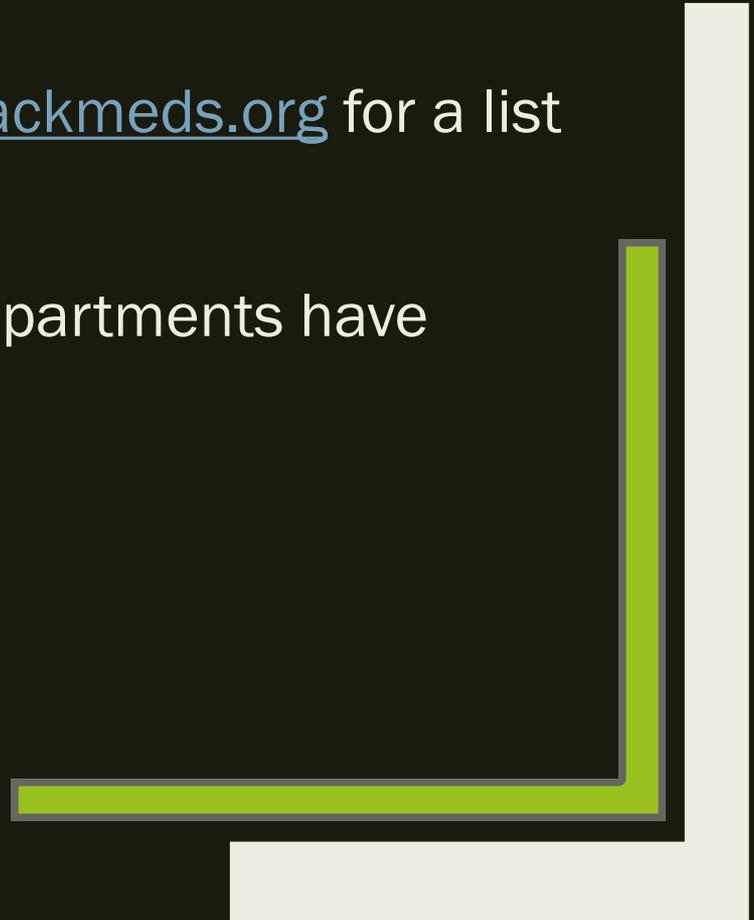


## Step 3

Find a nearby collection site.

Check online at [www.wmtakebackmeds.org](http://www.wmtakebackmeds.org) for a list of participating locations.

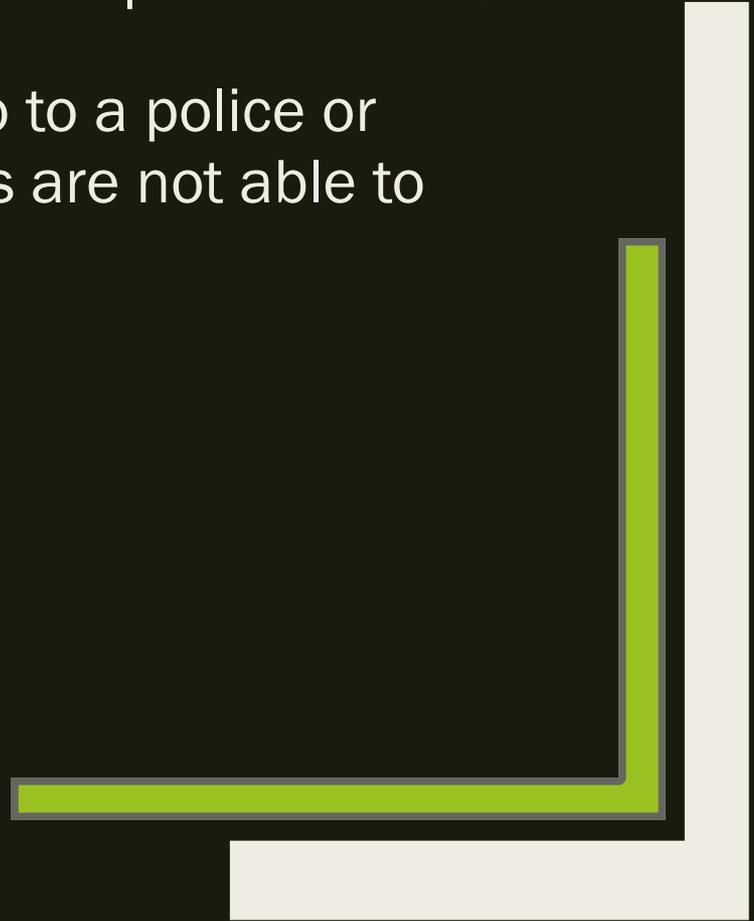
Most local police and sheriff departments have secure drop boxes.



# Step 4

Bring Medications to the correct drop off location.

Controlled medications must go to a police or sheriff department. Pharmacies are not able to accept them.

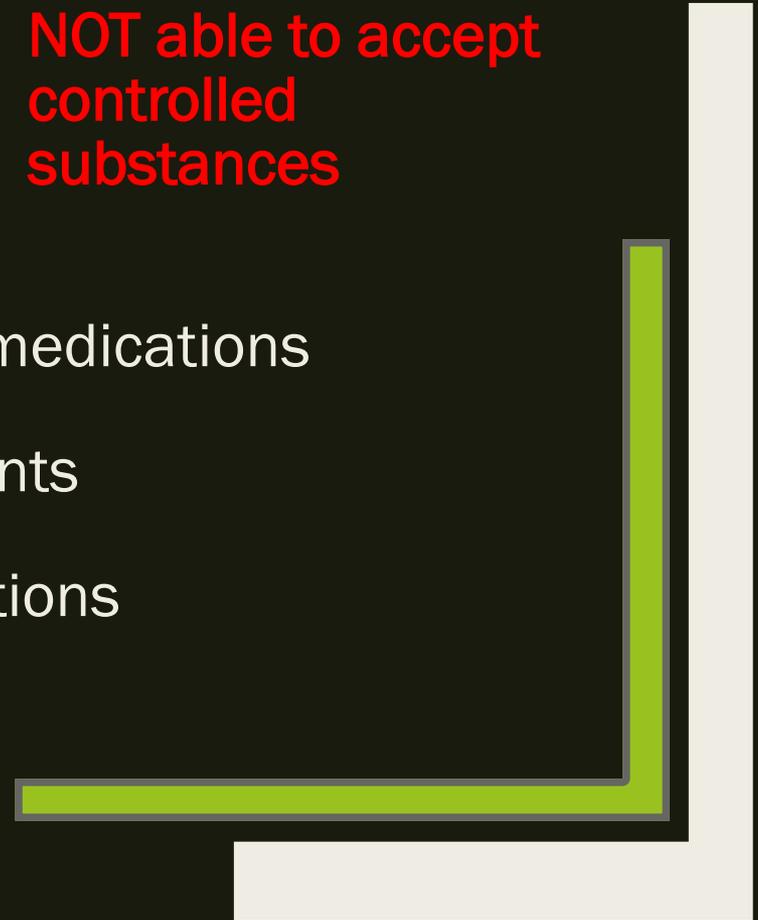


# Pharmacies Accepted Medications

Pharmacies can accept:

- Antibiotics/ steroids
- Cold/flu medications
- Non-controlled prescription medications
- Vitamins & herbal supplements
- *Medicated* ointments and lotions
- Pet medications
- Medication samples

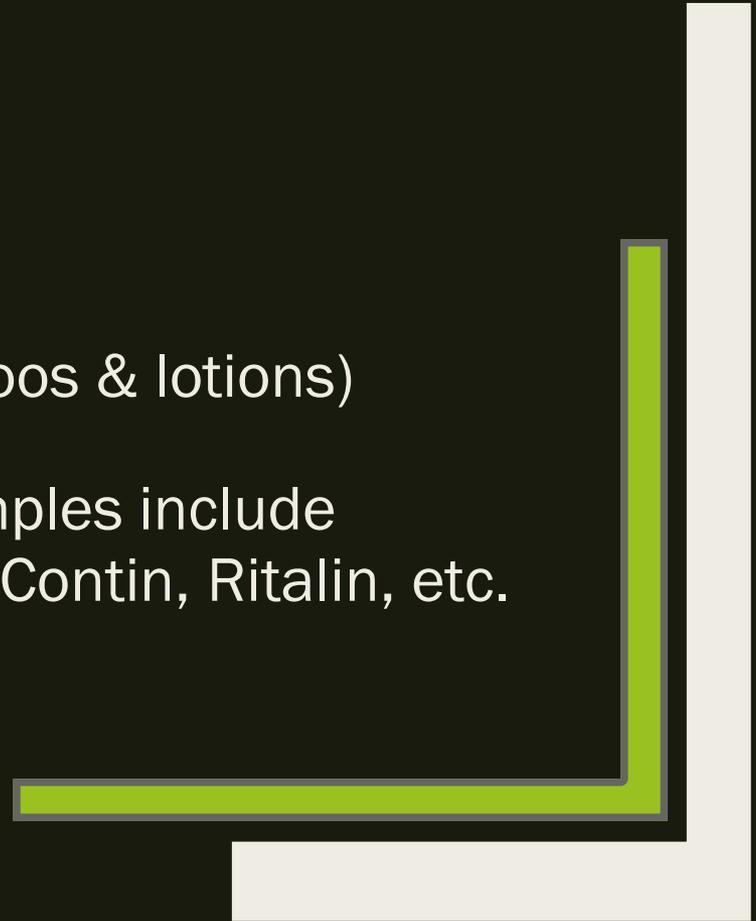
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**NOT** able to accept  
**controlled  
substances**



# Pharmacies do NOT Take

Pharmacies cannot accept:

- needles
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Personal care items (shampoos & lotions)
- Controlled substances. Examples include Codeine, Xanax, Vicodin, OxyContin, Ritalin, etc.



# Who Accepts Controlled Substances?

Controlled substances can be taken to local law enforcement drop boxes.

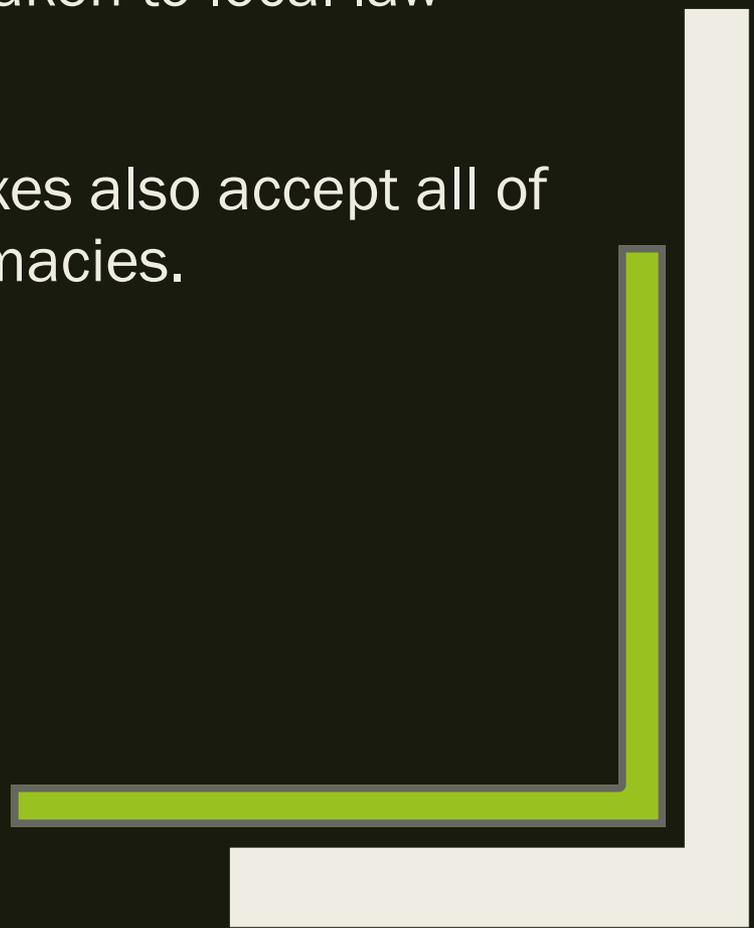
Local law enforcement drop boxes also accept all of the same medications as pharmacies.

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# What Happens To It All?

Using a network of police officers and wastewater treatment staff, the medications are all brought to the Kent County Waste-to-Energy Facility where they are safely incinerated.



In 2017, **4,095.64 lbs** of medicines were collected from local pharmacies alone! That doesn't include medications dropped off at police stations.



Please follow all steps for proper disposal when dropping off medications.

Certain restrictions may apply at any of the drop off locations. Call the pharmacy for more information on items they accept.

Remember that pharmacies volunteer to participate in SafeMeds.

