

Don't Flush Pharmaceuticals

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) is a public agency that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling services for approximately 2.6 million people in central and northwest Orange County. OC San has two Plants that treat 185 million gallon per day of wastewater from residential, commercial, and industrial sources.

Pharmaceuticals are medications that are either prescribed by a doctor or purchased over the counter without a prescription.

Environmental Impact

In the past, people were often told to flush unused medications down the toilet to keep them away from children and animals. However, we now know that flushing pharmaceuticals can harm the environment. Flushing medications is no longer recommended, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency strongly advises against disposing of any pharmaceuticals down the drain or toilet.

- Studies show that hormones found in some pharmaceuticals can disrupt the reproductive cycles of fish.
- Disposing of pharmaceuticals down the drain or toilet can contribute to antibiotic-resistant bacteria, making standard medications less effective at treating infections.



ONLY FLUSH **The 3 P's**
pee, poop, and (toilet) paper

Properly Dispose of Unwanted Pharmaceuticals

Option 1: Use a Pharmacy Take-Back Program

Take unwanted medications to a local pharmacy that offers a medication take-back program.

Option 2: Find a Safe Drop-Off Location

Find a safe medication drop-off location:
[MedTakeBackCalifornia.org](https://www.MedTakeBackCalifornia.org)

Additional drop-off locations may also be available during National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. For more information, visit [TakeBackDay.dea.gov](https://www.TakeBackDay.dea.gov)

Option 3: Dispose in the Trash Only When Take-Back Options Are Not Available

If a take-back program or drop-off location is not readily available, unused or unwanted medications may be disposed of in the trash.

To do so safely, crush or break the capsules or tablets, wet the contents, and place them in the original child-resistant container. Seal the container with tape and place it in the trash.