

TWO RIVERS WATER RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
NEWSLETTER 2009

Proper Disposal is Key to Proper Treatment
Don't Flush Pharmaceuticals or Hazardous Material

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) recently issued public guidelines for the proper and safe disposal of unused, unneeded, or expired household medications. Proper disposal is important because wastewater treatment facilities, including the Two Rivers Water Reclamation Authority, are not designed to remove pharmaceutical compounds and they may end up in local waterways or the ocean we all swim in. In addition, large quantities of pharmaceutical or other contaminants could potentially upset the biological treatment of wastewater by killing the bacteria used in the process. If this were to happen, the Two Rivers Water Reclamation Authority would be unable to properly treat wastewater and eliminate the organic materials it is designed to remove.

What should residents do?

Do not dispose of excess, expired, or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications by flushing or pouring them down the drain. Instead, all residents should follow these four simple steps:

- **Step 1** – Mark out personal information.
- **Step 2** – Mix with water and coffee grinds, cat litter or dirt.
- **Step 3** – Place in opaque container, such as a coffee can, and seal.
- **Step 4** – Hide in the trash.

Properly disposing of unwanted and expired prescription and over-the-counter medications in the trash promotes a healthy aquatic environment and prevents accidental poisoning and intentional abuse.

Other Hazardous Household Wastes

In addition to medications, there are other household materials that should never be poured down the drain and require special disposal or recycling. These hazardous materials include oil-based paint and varnish, antifreeze, aerosols, pool chemicals, corrosives, pesticides, herbicides, solvents, thinners, motor oil, gasoline and more.

To help residents in disposal and recycling efforts, Monmouth County has instituted hazardous waste collection programs. For a list of hazardous materials and proper disposal guidelines, as well as listings of scheduled collection events, residents are encouraged to contact Monmouth County at: www.njhazwaste.com/monhome.htm