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Protect the earth and each other by properly disposing of meds

As Wisconsinites celebrated Earth Day this weekend, let's continue to protect Lake Michigan by safely disposing of unused medicine, says Alderman Terry Witkowski. In partnership with Take Back My Meds MKE, Alderman Witkowski says this proper disposal also helps address the opioid crisis plaguing Milwaukee County.

Throwing unused medicine in the trash or flushing it down the toilet is harmful to the environment. Flushed medicine flows directly to Lake Michigan because it passes through wastewater treatment plants that are not designed to remove drugs. Medicine thrown in the garbage often leaches into rivers that flow to the lake. A 2013 study done by the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences found 32 drugs in Lake Michigan, the source of Milwaukee's drinking water

"With roughly one-third of all prescriptions going unused and less than 10 percent of that medicine being removed properly from homes, unused medicine left in the house often starts or feeds an addiction," says Alderman Witkowski. "Research show nearly 80 percent of heroin users used prescription opioids for non-medical reasons before beginning the use of heroin."

The website takebackmymeds.com shows the 76 locations in Milwaukee County for proper disposal of unused medicine. Included is every police station where citizens can anonymously drop off unused prescriptions in the red boxes located there.