

For Immediate Release

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Indiana American Water warns of water pollution from improper prescription drug disposal

GREENWOOD, Ind. -- Instead of flushing old medicines down the drain, [Indiana American Water](#) is encouraging customers and all Indiana residents to help eliminate water pollution by participating in the Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, Saturday, October 28, 2017, between 10am and 2pm at DEA approved [sites](#).

Prescription drugs when flushed or thrown away can make their way into Hoosier water sources throughout the state, potentially negatively impacting aquatic life, vegetation and wastewater treatment facilities.

“We encourage anyone with unused or expired medication to securely drop them off at one of the [DEA sites](#),” said Deborah Dewey, Indiana American Water President. “We must keep these items out of our waterways to ensure we keep Indiana’s water resources clean.”

Although a publication from Harvard Medical School, [Drugs in the water](#), reports that there’s no evidence of pharmaceutical and personal care products in the water harming people, it does provide information on studies that are showing adverse effects on aquatic life. The report outlines a study from the U.S. Geological Survey that found, “measurable amounts of one or more medications in 80% of the water samples drawn from a network of 139 streams in 30 states.

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The drugs identified included a witches' brew of antibiotics, antidepressants, blood thinners, heart medications (ACE inhibitors, calcium-channel blockers, digoxin), hormones (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone), and painkillers.”

Additionally, the United States [Environmental Protection Agency](#) warns, “In cities and towns where residences are connected to wastewater treatment plants, prescription and over-the-counter drugs poured down the sink or flushed down the toilet can pass through the treatment system and enter rivers and lakes. They may flow downstream to serve as sources for community drinking water supplies. Water treatment plants are generally not equipped to routinely remove medicines.”

In response to the studies from Harvard University and the U.S. Geological Survey, residents should locate participating spots such as local fire departments, police stations and hospitals to drop off their old medications to be incinerated, which is the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) recommended approach for pharmaceutical disposal. Flushing medications down the toilet and throwing them in the trash are highly discouraged.

While not all residents may be able to get to a DEA site on Saturday, Indiana American Water encourages all their customers and residents of Indiana to visit www.in.gov/idem/recycle/2343.htm to find out where they can dispose of expired prescription medication at a later date.

Dewey added, “By properly disposing of these medications, we are not only protecting our waterways for future generations, but also the future of our communities by ensuring these drugs, especially opioid painkillers, are not being diverted for recreational and illegal uses.”

To locate a participating pharmaceutical collection site near you, visit the DEA’s website at <http://bit.ly/2xmqHob> or call 1-800-882-9539.

About Indiana American Water

Indiana American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest investor-owned water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water and/or wastewater services to more than 1.3 million people. Founded in 1886, American Water is the largest publicly traded U.S. water and wastewater utility company. Marking its 130th anniversary this year, the company employs more than 6,700 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and market-based drinking water, wastewater and other related services to an estimated 15 million people in 47 states and Ontario, Canada. More information can be found at www.amwater.com.

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