

Prescription Drug Turn In Event at Make Vernonia Shine, April 17

We all have them. Plastic bottles of left over pills, unused pain medication, or prescription cough syrup, or just even outdated over-the-counter meds we use every day. Vernonia's Public Works Department wants us to avoid flushing any medications because they get into our wastewater treatment plant. Conservators of the environment say don't throw it away because it leaches into the ground. What do you do with it? Most of us just let it sit there in

Free H1N1 flu shots in April

Free H1N1 vaccinations will be available on a first come, first served basis on Saturday, April 17, at the Washington Grade School playshed in Vernonia, in conjunction with Make Vernonia Shine activities. This service is provided by Vernonia Pharmacy. No appointment needed.

If you miss the event on April 17, there will also be free H1N1 vaccinations, on April 21 and April 30, from Columbia County Public Health, 2370 Gable Road in St. Helens. An appointment is needed.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced recently that people with diabetes, heart disease, cancer or who are pregnant should be vaccinated. Children under age 10 who received only one dose need to have a second dose to be fully protected.

For more information or to make an appointment, call 503-397-4651.

the cupboard for a long time and what's the harm in that?

Unfortunately, there is a great potential harm to us all. According to the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators, there is a sharp rise of prescription drug misuse and abuse by teens and adults. Where are they getting them? From as close as the bathroom cabinet or the kitchen cupboard! There is an alarming rate of thefts, burglaries, and robberies that target homes and businesses to obtain prescription meds, and our elderly are the most vulnerable.

In an effort to help reduce

Columbia County hosted first Drug Turn In Event

On March 13, Columbia County and the Columbia County Sheriff's Office partnered with the Oregon Medical Association Alliance, Oregon Medical Association and the Oregon Partnership in a State Wide Prescription Drug Turn in Event. Columbia County residents turned in 47 pounds of the following:

- outdated, expired or unwanted prescription medications
- unneeded over-the-counter medicines
- drugs that didn't work for the individual, a family member, or pet
- drugs that are no longer used
- medicine from deceased family members
- unknown tablets and capsules

"Sgt. Dustin Hald of the Columbia County Sheriff's Office

access to unused or unwanted medications, Vernonia Police Department (VPD) is partnering with Vernonia Pharmacy and the Vernonia Health Center Board to hold a Prescription Drug Turn-In Event. This event is in conjunction with the Vernonia Shine Day on April 17. While we are cleaning up our city streets, why not clean out your medicine chest too!

Officers from the VPD will be present to receive all medications. It will then be catalogued and a receipt will be given for all returns. What is collected will be taken to the proper facilities to be disposed of safely

deserves a huge amount of credit for organizing this event," said Roy Weedman, Columbia County Solid Waste Coordinator.

Many people either flush their medications down the toilet or pour them down the drain. This all seems okay, but many sewage treatment plants do not remove or treat pharmaceuticals or cosmetics from the waste stream. Essentially, these dissolved/diluted products end up in our rivers. Since drug turn-in events are rare, many citizens often ask, "How can I dispose of my outdated medications?" It is important to safeguard lives and protect the environment. If you do not use all of your prescribed or over-the-counter medication, here are a few small steps you can take in disposing of unused medicines properly:

- Do not flush unused medications and do not pour them down a sink or drain.
- Dispose of unused med-

and securely. The pharmacist will be on site to help identify any unknown items that you may have, as well. Further, each individual who returns items will have a chance to win a small prescription safe to help keep meds out of harm's way.

As a bonus, Vernonia Pharmacy has a limited supply of H1N1 shots and nasal vaccines to administer for free while supplies last. People age 15 and older are eligible. Nasal application is available only for individuals between the ages of 15 and 50 years. Individuals between 15 and 17 need parental permission. Anyone who

comes to the booth is eligible while supplies last.

If you miss the Prescription Drug Turn In Event, you can turn in any unused, found, and out-of-date medications, year round, by contacting the VPD. For more information call 503-429-7335.

When discarding unused medications, ensure the protection of children and pets from potentially negative effects by pouring medication into a sealable plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), crush it or add water to dissolve it. Add kitty litter, sawdust, coffee grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for pets and children to eat) to the plastic bag. Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash. Remove and destroy ALL identifying personal information (prescription label) from all medication containers before recycling them or throwing them away.

There will be a Prescription Drug Turn-in event in Vernonia on April 17, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the covered play area beside Washington Grade School. This event is being held in conjunction with Make Vernonia Shine day.

For more information regarding disposal of pharmaceuticals, check out Smart Disposal @ www.smarxtdisposal.net.

Columbia County offers HIV tests

Columbia County Public Health is offering confidential HIV Counseling, Testing and Referral, in addition to Hepatitis A and B vaccinations, by appointment at the clinic at 2370 Gable Road in St. Helens.

Appointments can be made by calling 503-397-4651. Bilingual services are available by special request. Fees are on a sliding scale.

Columbia County Mental Health
800-294-5211

Suicide Hotline
1-800-784-2433
or
1-800-273-TALK(8255)

Domestic Abuse Hotline
503-397-6161
or
866-397-6161



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