



PHARMACEUTICALS IN DRINKING WATER

Overview

- ◆ YLWD is committed to public health and safety and works hard to ensure that your drinking water is the safest it can possibly be.
- ◆ The presence of pharmaceutical and other personal care products in water is not new and the health and safety impacts have been studied for many years.
- ◆ Recently, advances in laboratory technology have made it easier to detect and measure them at extremely low levels. The fact that a substance is detectable does not mean the substance is harmful to humans drinking average amounts of water. Additional research is needed to determine which pharmaceuticals and personal care products pose a risk, if any.

Disposing of Pharmaceuticals Appropriately

Until more research is done, there are steps we can all take to reduce the presence of pharmaceuticals in the water. Don't flush prescription drugs down the toilet, instead, throw them in the trash. Contact your pharmacy for the nearest location to dispose of prescription medications safely.

Summary

Water agencies, including YLWD, work closely with the agencies that regulate drinking water. These regulatory agencies include the California Department of Public Health Services and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The USEPA is using a four-pronged approach to assessing pharmaceutical in water as well as other contaminants recently identified. These steps are:

- ◆ Identifying available information on the occurrence & potential risks to health and the environment
- ◆ Conducting research to fill in the gaps
- ◆ Taking action when appropriate
- ◆ Promoting pollution prevention
- ◆ Taking action when appropriate

In addition, the USEPA is working with research partners to develop improved testing methods and to determine which treatment technologies remove contaminants from water most effectively. Currently, all YLWD groundwater is pharmaceutical-free due to the reverse-osmosis treatment process at OCWD's Groundwater Replenishment System.

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