



June 29, 2017

### **Patients urged to dispose of unwanted medicines safely**

People with expired or unwanted medicines at home are urged to dispose of them through the Dispose of Unwanted Medicine Properly (DUMP) initiative.

All pharmacies across Auckland, in collaboration with Waitemata, Auckland and Counties Manukau District Health Boards, offer a free, safe collection and disposal service for unwanted and out-of-date medicines through the DUMP project.

This includes over-the-counter and prescription medicines, sharp items such as needles and cytotoxic (chemotherapy) drugs.

Waitemata DHB Funding and Development Manager for Primary Care Tim Wood says the DUMP project is part of Waitemata DHB's commitment to improving patient safety in hospitals and in the community.

"Providing this service means patients and those living in their homes will be safer by reducing any risk of incorrectly using medicines," Mr Wood says.

"People should tell their doctor or pharmacist if they are no longer taking a particular medicine and should only ask for the medicines they need when collecting them from the pharmacy."

People are urged to remember the following rules when disposing of medicine:

- **Don't flush medicines down the toilet** – sewerage plants are unable to treat all chemicals in waste water and this could result in waterway contamination.
  - **Don't pour medicines down the sink** – highly soluble medicines could harm aquatic life.
  - **Don't throw medicines in the rubbish or recycling bin** – medical waste in landfills is prohibited under the Auckland Council Solid Waste Bylaw because it can harm the environment.
- The DUMP project is also supported by International Waste Ltd and Auckland Council.

ENDS

**For further information contact:**

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