

This is your water on drugs

Improper disposal of medications

Every year, many families are faced with the challenge of how to dispose of medicines that are not entirely consumed. Prescriptions change, symptoms improve, patients die, and individuals fail to take their medications as directed. All of these situations can leave people wondering what to do with the unused portions. In addition, over-the-counter medications purchased in large quantities often expire before they are used. These medications are usually thrown in the trash, flushed down the toilet, or simply left to pile up in the medicine cabinet. This, in turn, can lead to drugs contaminating our water supply, accidentally poisoning children and pets, or being stolen for illegal use.

A wide array of pharmaceuticals are present in our waterways—hormones, antibiotics, analgesics, antidepressants, and tranquilizers, to name a few. In 1999-2000, the U.S. Geological Survey evaluated 139 streams

in 30 states for pharmaceuticals, hormones, and other organic contaminants. They found contamination in 80% of the streams tested. Septic systems and wastewater treatment plants currently in use were not designed to remove pharmaceuticals. Several layers of additional and expensive treatment would be required to remove all of these chemicals from the water. Over multiple generations, the presence of medications in these bodies of water could impact aquatic life, animals, and even humans.

Improper storage and disposal of medications can also have tragic consequences for our children and pets. Every year, about 54,000 children under the age of six are treated in emergency rooms for poisoning from self-ingested prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Children are not the only ones at risk from accidental poisoning. In 2011, the Animal Poison Control Center



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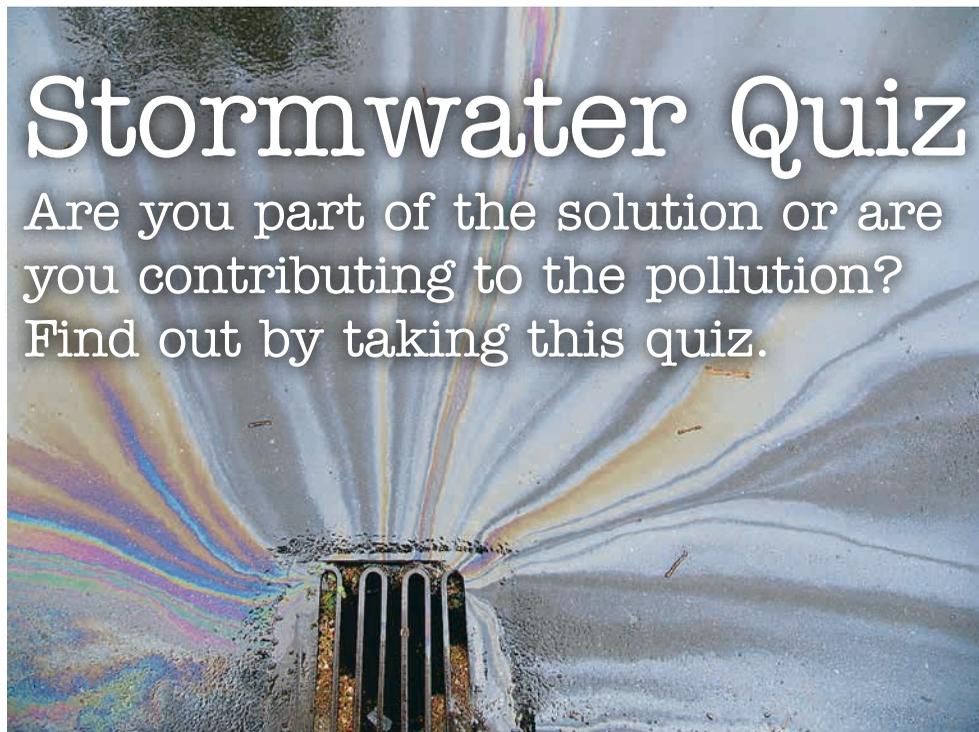
painkillers (narcotics), depressants prescribed for anxiety or sleep disorders, and stimulants used to treat attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or narcolepsy. In 2009, 16 million Americans over the age of 11 had taken a prescription pain reliever, tranquilizer, stimulant, or sedative for non-medical purposes in the year prior to being surveyed. Simply throwing these drugs in the trash leaves the possibility that someone may end up using or distributing them in an illegal fashion. And, simply allowing them to build up in your cupboard is not any better. Of surveyed teens who abused prescription pain relievers, 62% had to look no further than their parents' medicine cabinets.

So, the question is, "What do I do with these drugs instead?" The best option is to find a local Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Roundup. These events provide the opportunity for residents to properly dispose of toxic items lying around their homes, including expired or unneeded medications. For details about the roundups, refer to the article below.

Proper disposal of unneeded medications protects our environment, our communities, and our families.

received over 25,000 calls about pets consuming prescription drugs intended for people.

Finally, improper disposal or indefinite storage of certain pharmaceuticals creates opportunities for drug abuse. Commonly abused prescription drugs include opioid



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Stormwater Quiz

Are you part of the solution or are you contributing to the pollution? Find out by taking this quiz.

- You have just finished painting your bedroom and have paint left over that you will probably never use. You decide to:**
 - Throw the paint cans in the trash.
 - Rinse out the cans in the driveway with a hose.
 - Take the paint in its original container to a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Roundup.
 - Use the paint to make racing stripes on your car.

- The best way to clean leaves and debris from your driveway and sidewalk is to:**
 - Use high-powered water to wash the area.
 - Sweep them into the gutter for street cleaners to pick up.
 - Recycle the leaves in your flowerbed, garden, or compost bin.
 - Sweep them into your neighbors yard and make them deal with it.
- You love a green lawn, but you're aware of how dangerous fertilizers can**

- be if they get into our waterways. So you always make sure to:**
 - Limit fertilizer use to areas away from pavement.
 - Skip fertilizers but water your lawn constantly.
 - Fertilize before it rains.
 - Use AstroTurf instead. Hey, it was good enough for the Brady Family!
- To save money, you choose to change the oil in your car yourself. Although you are being careful to drain all the fluids in separate containers, you accidentally spill oil on the driveway. You decide to:**
 - Hose the driveway clean to avoid staining.
 - Leave it; there are already many stains.
 - Use kitty litter or cornmeal to soak up the oil, and then sweep it up and put it into the garbage.
 - Use degreaser soap and water and scrub the stain out.
- Your dog is your best friend, but one of your least favorite parts of dog ownership is cleaning up behind him. Still, you know that dog waste is a major stormwater pollutant, so you always:**
 - Bring plenty of bags on every walk.
 - Get upset when you see other people not cleaning up after their dog.
 - Encourage your dog to go under a bush or in a flowerbed.
 - Train your dog to use the toilet.

- True or false: It's okay to throw fruit on the ground.**
 - True
 - False
- True or false: Cigarette butts are biodegradable.**
 - True
 - False
- True or false: Fertilizers encourage algae growth in waterways and the ocean.**
 - True
 - False
- True or false: Stormwater is untreated before flowing to the ocean.**
 - True
 - False
- The trash nets in Ballona Creek and the Los Angeles River capture how many tons of trash each year?**
 - 50
 - 100
 - 200
 - 500
- Which of the following are the most common stormwater pollutants (check all that apply)?**
 - Plastic bags
 - Styrofoam or paper cups
 - Cigarette butts
 - All of the above

Answers: 1 c; 2 c; 3 a; 4 c; 5 a; 6 b; 7 b; 8 a; 9 a; 10 c; 11 d

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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Free Hazardous Materials Roundups Available

Los Angeles County residents may properly dispose of their Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) at no cost by dropping it off at one of the weekly, one-day collection roundups. These events are held on Saturdays at various locations throughout L.A. County. An event is usually held in or near La Verne in December and June of each year. Other events are held year-round in surrounding communities.

Roundups are offered to all L.A. County residents. HHW accepted includes motor oil and filters; brake, transmission, and automotive fluids; gasoline; paint and paint thinners; turpentine; cleaners with acid or lye; pesticides and herbicides; household and car batteries; pool chemicals; household and automotive batteries; and fluorescent tubes and bulbs. In addition, residents can also recycle electronics and old medications. Please leave all explosives, ammunition, radioactive materials, trash, tires, and business waste at home.

There are a few steps you need to take to get your items ready for the roundup, and things to remember once you're there. Bring the items you wish to dispose in a sturdy box, preferably in their original, labeled containers. Do not EVER mix products together. Please note that it is illegal to transport more than 15 gallons or 125 pounds of hazardous waste in your personal vehicle. Be prepared to leave your containers at the site. Because of permitting requirements and the number of people who use this program, items such as gasoline cans WILL NOT be returned.

Visit www.888CleanLA.com for a complete schedule of upcoming events or call (888) CLEAN-LA.



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Fall 2013



Goodbye to Puente Hills

Puente Hills Landfill, one of the country's largest landfills, will discontinue operations on October 31, 2013 with 127,000 tons of waste on its land. Plans for a smooth transition have been in the works for years, and no major changes to residents' collection services will be necessary. Puente Hills has been in operation since 1957 and is home to the world's largest "gas-to-energy" project. After closure, the landfill will continue to be monitored, and energy will be harvested from waste for several more years.



For the City of La Verne, the transition away from Puente Hills has been occurring over the past several years. Since 2008, La Verne's trash has gone to a transfer station and then headed to Waste Management's El Sobrante Landfill in Corona. However, green waste continued to go to Puente Hills where it was used to cover the trash at the end of each day.

As the closure grew near, Waste Management took action, making plans for a state of the art materials recovery facility (MRF) and transfer station in the City of Azusa. The facility opened recently and has begun handling trash and green waste, including that collected

in La Verne. Early in 2014, recyclable materials will also be delivered to this facility for sorting. Once in full operation, the MRF will be able to process up to 800 tons of recyclables and 500 tons of green waste per day. The transfer station will be able to manage as much as 2,500 tons of trash per day.

The trash that comes into the Azusa MRF/Transfer Station is loaded into semi-trailers, which then head to the El Sobrante Landfill during evening hours to reduce congestion on area roadways. Waste Management owns and operates the El Sobrante Landfill, which can accept up to 70,000 tons of trash per week and has a projected life span of 35-40 more years. The landfill sits on 688 acres, 470 of which are

permitted for trash handling and disposal. Green waste will also go to this facility where it will be processed before being delivered to facilities in Kern, Ventura, and Riverside counties for beneficial use. The El Sobrante Landfill has an excellent record in protecting the environment, as well as worker health and safety. In addition, the landfill's gas-to-energy facility turns methane, which is emitted as waste decomposes, into 3.84 megawatts of electricity each year.

Puente Hills may be closing, but La Verne's discards are on the road to recovery.



Smart Gardening Program Available to La Verne Residents

The Smart Gardening Program sponsored by Los Angeles County provides FREE workshops with hands-on demonstrations covering backyard composting, worm composting, grass recycling, and water-wise and fire-wise gardening. At these workshops, you'll learn Smart Gardening techniques to create and maintain healthy, beautiful, drought-tolerant lawns and gardens by giving your plants what they crave—nutrient-rich soil. These workshops, which are about two hours long, cover a wide spectrum of helpful yard maintenance tips. At most locations, no reservations are required.

Residents will receive easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions on how to compost. You'll also see demonstrations of various composting techniques with different types of compost bins. In a continued effort to increase composting countywide, Los Angeles County has worked with various composting bin vendors to provide



bins at affordable prices to all residents. At most workshops, residents can purchase a backyard composting bin and a worm composting bin at discounted prices.

To learn more about the Smart Gardening Program and to find the schedule for upcoming workshops in our area, call (888) CLEAN-LA or visit www.smartgardening.com.

Keep the rate climbing

The national recycling rate has increased every year since 1980 and currently sits just above 34%. In California, we're doing even better—about 65% of our discards never see a landfill. In order to keep up these trends, once a year America Recycles Day strives to motivate more recycling and increase education efforts.

Keeping the recycling effort moving comes from continuing to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Recycling is the easiest thing we can do 365 days a year to save energy, conserve natural resources, and create green jobs. Take the pledge for America Recycles Day and commit to taking action. First, "precycle" by selecting locally recyclable products and packages when you shop. Then, collect clean recyclable materials and deliver them to the curb or a drop-off center for processing. Finally, look for recycled-content products by checking for terms like "post-consumer recycled content" on the tag or packaging of the items you purchase.

When you pledge this year, you have the option of choosing one item that you'll recycle more than you have in the past. Nationwide, Americans recycle over 72% of paper, but just



America Recycles Day

NOVEMBER 15

above 28% of plastic milk jugs. Think about something you might not normally recycle, like cell phones or shampoo bottles, and make an effort to increase the recovery of that item.

Go to www.americarecyclesday.org to learn more about recycling and to take the pledge.

If you have questions about what, how, or where to recycle locally, please contact La Verne Customer Service at (909) 596-8744 or visit www.ci.la-verne.ca.us.

Dispose of E-Waste the Right Way

Bonita High School is hosting a free, one-day electronic waste collection event on Saturday, October 12, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This event will be held at Bonita High School, located at 3102 "D" Street (in the small administration parking lot), and will help residents dispose of old electronic equipment the right way. It's easy to participate in this event. The entire process only takes a few minutes, and you never have to leave your car.

For the last several years, it has been illegal to dispose of electronics in the trash. Proper disposal prevents hazardous components inside electronic items from harming our environment. Residents and businesses can discard their electronic waste, such as televisions, computer CPUs, monitors, laptops, keyboards, printers, tablets, e-readers, cell phones, and related items, at special collections.

La Verne residents also have the option of having Waste Management pick up electronic waste. Waste Management will accept electronic waste as part of the regular bulky item pickup program. There is no charge; however, it counts as one of the free bulky item pickups residents receive each year.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW), items such as old paints, batteries, pesticides, and other chemicals, will *not* be collected



at the October event. However, residents will have the opportunity to safely dispose of HHW at a Countrywide Roundup at Brackett Field in December. Many common household products pose a hazard to the environment if disposed improperly. Materials such as used motor oil, paint, turpentine, pesticides, and garden herbicides can damage the environment when tossed in the trash or poured into the storm drain.

For more information on upcoming household hazardous waste or electronic waste collection events, call La Verne Customer Service at (909) 596-8744.

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