

Consumer Choices

Through making healthy consumer choices you can help to lessen the effect of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) on your family and the environment. You can easily avoid some EDCs by selecting plastics that are BPA free. By doing so you are eliminating Bisphenol A, an ingredient in plastics which has been linked to human health issues. Go through your plastic containers at home and throw away any containers marked as Number 7 plastics as they contain BPA. Never heat food in plastic containers, by doing so you directly introduce toxic chemicals into your food.

When you are purchasing toothpaste, soap or other anti-bacterial products avoid goods that include *triclosan* as an ingredient. Natural or chemical free products are safest for your family and the environment.

Next time you are at the store, think about the ingredients in the products you buy and how they affect human and environmental health.

Resources

<http://www.potomacwaterwatch.org/> - water issues in the Potomac Region

<http://www.epa.gov/ppcp/> - the EPA website on pharmaceuticals and personal care products

<http://www.wvrxabuse.org/> - Prescription Drug (Rx) Abuse Quitline, information on prescription drug abuse and how to get help

www.ewg.org - Environmental Working Group a guide to safe consumer products and more information in EDCs

<http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/> - database of household products and their ingredient lists. Guides consumers towards environmentally healthy purchases

Partners



West Virginia Consumer Drug Return Partnership



Keeping our water pharmaceutical-free

www.wvrivers.org/WVCDRP/overview.html

The Problem

Pharmaceuticals, both the medicines your doctor prescribes to you and the over-the-counter treatments you purchase at your local pharmacy contain powerful chemicals that can have adverse effects on the environment.

The Issues

Intersex Fish

In 2008, male small mouth bass in the Potomac were found with the beginnings of eggs in their reproductive organs. This alarming mutation is not confined to West Virginia. Fish and other aquatic wildlife around the world are showing mutations to their reproductive organs.

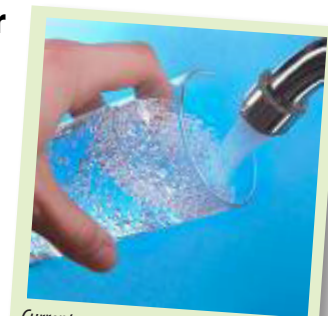


Potomac small mouth bass have exhibited hermaphroditic traits. In some areas 100% of fish tested were intersex.

The probable culprits of these changes are Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs), man-made chemicals which mimic natural hormones found in our everyday products. Pharmaceuticals are a key source of these chemicals, making it critical to follow proper disposal guidelines.

Drinking Water

Every major metropolitan area in the U.S. has trace amounts of pharmaceuticals in the drinking water.



Current water treatment plants can not filter out pharmaceuticals.

These chemicals, including EDCs, cannot be effectively removed from our drinking water through most filtration processes. Unfortunately, switching to bottled water is not a solution as most bottled water contains the same pharmaceutical compounds as tap water.

Prescription Drug Abuse

Prescription medications are the most widely abused substance excluding marijuana. The Mountain State has the nation's highest rate of drug-related deaths; between 2001 and 2008 more than 9 out of 10 of those deaths involved prescription medications. Drug overdoses now kill more West Virginians each year than car accidents. These startling statistics directly coincide with the availability of prescription medications to non-prescribed users.



8.5% of West Virginian teens admit to abusing Rx medicines.

DO NOT FLUSH!

By flushing your medications down the toilet or throwing them in the trash you are not eliminating the environmental threats posed by pharmaceuticals. The only way to safely and easily dispose of your unwanted and unused pharmaceuticals is through a drug return program.

For participating pharmacies please visit:
www.wvrivers.org



The Solution

- ▶ Gather the medications you would like to dispose of
- ▶ NO controlled substances
- ▶ Check www.wvrivers.org to see if your prescription falls under this category. The pharmacist will also verify that the prescription is not a controlled substance
- ▶ Bring the medications to a participating **West Virginia Consumer Drug Return Partnership** pharmacy
- ▶ Hand them to the pharmacist

It's a safe, easy and environmentally friendly way to make a difference in our communities and our earth!