

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TTUHSC to Host Amarillo's Spring Medication Cleanout™ *The event kicks off National Poison Prevention Week (March 20-26)*

AMARILLO, Texas — With the help of the Texas Panhandle Poison Center (TPPC), which is managed by the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy, local residents can properly dispose of all expired, unwanted or unnecessary medications at the Medication Cleanout™ event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 19 (Saturday) at the TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy, 1300 South Coulter.

This event kicks off National Poison Prevention Week (March 20-26).

Medication Cleanout™ employs a drive-thru, drop-off format that allows residents to conveniently dispose of their medications without leaving their cars. Yard signs will be posted to help drivers locate the drive-thru path. Medications should be left in their original containers.

TPPC Managing Director Jeanie Jaramillo-Stametz, Pharm.D., who also is an assistant professor of pharmacy practice at the Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy, encourages Amarillo residents and those from the surrounding area to bring their unused, expired or unnecessary medications for proper disposal. The program also provides disposal services for syringes or sharps. This is TPPC's 75th Medication Cleanout™ event since the program began in 2009.

To date, more than 67,000 pounds of medications and sharps have been collected for proper disposal.

Jaramillo-Stametz says old medications become potential sources of poisoning to young children or may be accessed by teens experimenting with drugs. They are also a hazard to adults and elderly as they increase the risk of choosing the wrong bottle or taking medications that are no longer required.

"Medication Cleanout™ is a proactive approach to safeguard our communities by providing a free and convenient way for people to dispose of these medications in a legal, environmentally sound and convenient manner," Jaramillo-Stametz adds.

In 2021, 46,992 medication-related poison exposures in children age 5 or younger were reported to poison centers; 72% of poison-related deaths reported to Texas poison centers resulted from exposure to prescription and/or over-the-counter medications.

Jaramillo-Stametz says the abuse of prescription medications continues to be a national epidemic. In 2021, 28,017 self-harm and/or suicidal gestures reported to Texas poison centers resulted from exposure to medications

“Now is the time to clean out your medicine cabinets and remove these items from your homes to reduce the risk of poisoning by medications,” Jaramillo-Stametz says. “Many people, whether pre-teens, teens or adults are experiencing depression and sadness because of events happening in the world. This could lead them to impulsively turn to the medicine cabinet for relief or as a suicidal gesture. By taking just a few minutes to clean out your medication, you could be saving a life because poisoning, which includes medication overdose is the third most common means of suicide today in the U.S.”

Because of environmental restrictions, only medications from households can be accepted. Medications from clinics, pharmacies and other businesses are not allowed.

For more information about the Medication Cleanout™, call (806) 414-9495 or visit www.MedicationCleanout.com.