



## What is the Big Red Barrel?

A prescription and over-the-counter drug disposal program that is safe, legal, convenient, and environmentally-friendly.

## Why use the Big Red Barrel?

Medicine abuse hurts people. In 2007, more Michigan residents died as a direct consequence of prescription (Rx) drug abuse (1,544) than from motor vehicle accidents or firearms in the same year (Source: CDC, 2007). In western Washtenaw County, 11% of middle school students have taken a prescription painkiller without a doctor's prescription. Among high school students, 1 in 20 has abused an Rx drug within the past month (Source: MiPHY Survey, 2010).

When asked how Rx narcotics were obtained for non-medical use, 70% of 12th graders said they were given to them by a friend or relative (Source: Monitoring the Future Survey 2011). Many kids assume it is safe to abuse medicine, because it is prescribed by a doctor, or sold in a pharmacy. But when taken in high doses or mixed with other drugs, many medications have serious and life-threatening consequences, including addiction, overdose, and progression to illegal drugs like heroin.

Improper disposal of unused medication hurts our environment. Pharmaceuticals are present and persistent in Michigan's waters, meaning they do not easily break down. According to Christine Grossman, Waste Specialist with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, "Environmental testing has shown materials like sleep aids, blood pressure meds, birth control, antidepressants, and various other medications in our water."

## How does the Big Red Barrel work?

You can bring your unused prescription or over-the-counter medications to the Big Red Barrel drop box, located at the Manchester Village Office Washtenaw County Sheriff substation. The barrel will be accessible 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Monday - Friday, and during library hours. There will be posted instructions and supplies available there for your use. For more information, call (734) 260-2822, or visit [www.vil-manchester.org](http://www.vil-manchester.org).

Barrels will also be located at the Chelsea Police Department and the Washtenaw County Sheriff sub-stations in Dexter and Scio Township, and accessible 24/7. The Big Red Barrel project is a collaborative effort between the Chelsea, Dexter and Manchester Wellness Coalitions, Chelsea Police, Washtenaw County Sheriff, South & West Washtenaw Consortium, the Villages of Manchester and Dexter, the City of Chelsea, SRSLY, Manchester Voices, Washtenaw Community Health Organizations, Livingston County Community Alliance, Karen Bergbower & Associates, and a grant from the Chelsea-Area Wellness Foundation.