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## #DYK YOU CAN RETURN UNWANTED VETERINARY MEDICINES TO THE PHARMACY FOR SAFE DISPOSAL?

When it comes to discarding unused, unwanted or expired medicines, Australia is a nation of hoarders, according to a study from Griffith University.

The 2018 study “*You don’t throw these things out: an exploration of medicines retention and disposal practices in Australian homes*” concluded that many households don’t properly store or dispose of old medicines. Old and forgotten medicines are routinely kept in multiple locations around households. This creates risks for accidental ingestion by children and pets or decreased efficacy.

The same is true for veterinary medicines, says Animal Medicines Australia, the peak body for Australia’s animal health companies. It’s premier pet report, [Pets in Australia: a national survey of pets & people](#) established Australia is a nation of pet lovers with 69% of households living with at least one pet.

Launching the [Vet-Med Disposal Campaign](#) to help veterinarians, farmers and pet owners dispose of medicines safely, AMA’s Executive Director Ben Stapley says greater consumer awareness of the risks of keeping expired medicines on the farm or at home is needed.

“Disposing of old, expired and unused medicines responsibly, whether for your human or animal family members, is essential to safeguarding your health and to protect the environment,” says Mr Stapley.

“There are several easy ways pet owners and farmers can safely and responsibly dispose of unwanted and old medicines.

“The Return Unwanted Medicines Project (the RUM Project) provides an easy, free avenue to clean out your kitchen, pantry and bathroom drawers,” says Mr Stapley.

“Firstly, read the labels on all those unused medicines and consider if your pet still needs them. Check the expiry date then place all unneeded meds in a bag or container for safe transport and return them to your local pharmacy, where your pharmacist will put them in a secure bin for disposal.”

Farmers looking to safely dispose of vet meds also have convenient disposal options at hand.

“Farmers tend to have larger quantities of vet meds to dispose of because of the size and number of their animals. Leftover medicines in one litre containers or less, can be disposed of at participating pharmacies in Australia through the RUM Project.

“Larger quantities in containers holding one litre or more may be eligible for Agsafe’s ClemClear® program, which is also free for products carrying the **drumMUSTER** logo.”

“As with human medicines, keeping expired vet meds in the home or on-farm for possible DIY diagnosis at a later date is never a good idea,” says Mr. Stapley.

“Self-diagnosing your pet, unless you are a trained veterinarian, can delay vital medical treatment your pet may need. Similarly, using expired animal medicines may be ineffectual or even dangerous so if you have a sick animal, always consult your vet. And when it comes to those old veterinary medicines lying about the place, a good rule of thumb is if in doubt, dispose of it responsibly.”

For more information and to check eligibility criteria go to [animalmedicines.org.au](http://animalmedicines.org.au), [www.chemclear.org.au](http://www.chemclear.org.au), [www.returnmed.com.au](http://www.returnmed.com.au) or talk to your local pharmacist.

## Ends

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