



Consumer Watch

A Monthly Newsletter from the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection

Jonathan A. Harris, Commissioner

Dannel P. Malloy, Governor

www.ct.gov/dcp

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Suggested Links

www.ct.gov/dcp

Our website offers the latest and most comprehensive information that we have on dozens of consumer-related topics!

www.smartconsumer.ct.gov

Basic information to protect yourself and avoid scams!

<https://www.elicense.ct.gov>

To verify a license, permit or registration, or to run a roster of licensees. Also the place for online renewal!

Contact Us

www.ct.gov/dcp

dcp.communications@ct.gov



School's Out -- Safety's In!

June is National Safety Month! Take this opportunity to make your home a safer place for loved ones, family pets, visitors, friends -- even neighbors! Spend a few minutes ridding your home of unused, unneeded, outdated medications -- in a way that's safest for everyone.



Medication left in drawers or cabinets can lead to accidental poisoning of children or pets, or theft by someone who would use or sell the drugs for non-medical use. You should follow the steps outlined in our new **YouTube video** (*instructions also printed on page 2*) and not toss unwanted medicine out with the weekly trash, which poses safety risks. Pouring unwanted medicine down the drain is no better. Consider the cumulative effect of potent chemicals flowing daily through drain pipes into our water supply. We cannot fully know the long-term results of this practice on water supplies, aquatic ecology, wildlife and the environment as a whole. It makes sense to reduce our impact by NOT adding more chemicals if we don't need to.

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Commissioner's Comments



Jonathan A. Harris
Commissioner

The mission of the Department is to provide to consumers cost-effective protection that does not impose undue burdens on businesses that play by the rules. One of the best ways to accomplish this is through education – giving consumers the information they can use to protect themselves and their families. This newsletter is one of many methods we utilize to get the word out. So please, take the time to digest the information in this and other issues, take a look at our websites (ct.gov/dcp and smartconsumer.ct.gov) and follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/ctdcp) and Facebook (facebook.com/ctdcp). Also, please let us know if you have a complaint or know of a scam or other information that would help us help you and our fellow citizens (dcp.frauds@ct.gov). Most importantly, always be proactive - take the steps you need to protect yourself and your loved ones. Be a smart consumer.

Did you know? Meds that can poison your pets

These items commonly found in household cabinets can be especially harmful to animals. Don't let your pets get their paws on them!

1. **Simple aspirin** along with products containing the drug, such as Kaopectate, Maalox, Anacin, Excedrin, and Vanquish, can be fatal to cats.
2. **NSAIDs** (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) like ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or naproxen (Aleve) are the most common cause of pet poisoning in small animals, and can cause serious problems even in minimal doses. Pets are extremely sensitive to their effects, and may experience stomach and intestinal ulcers and—in the case of cats—kidney damage.
3. **Antidepressants** can cause vomiting and lethargy and certain types can lead to serotonin syndrome—a condition marked by agitation, elevated body temperature, heart rate and blood pressure, disorientation, vocalization, tremors and seizures.
4. **Acetaminophen** (Tylenol and many medicines containing the drug, e.g., Contac, Dayquil, Sudafed, Zicam) can damage red blood cells and interfere with their ability to transport oxygen in cats. In dogs, it can cause liver damage and, at higher doses, red blood cell damage.
5. **ADHD drugs** containing Methylphenidate act as stimulants in pets and can dangerously elevate heart rates, blood pressure and body temperature, as well as cause seizures.
6. **Fluorouracil**—an anti-cancer drug—is used topically to treat minor skin cancers and solar keratitis in people. It can be rapidly fatal to dogs, causing severe vomiting, seizures and cardiac arrest -- even in dogs that only chewed on discarded cotton swabs used as applicators.
7. **Isoniazid**, a drug used to defend against tuberculosis, can cause in dogs a rapid onset of severe seizures that may ultimately result in death.
8. **Pseudoephedrine** – the popular decongestant in many cold and sinus products, acts like a stimulant if ingested by pets. In cats and dogs, it causes elevated heart rates, blood pressure and body temperature as well as seizures.
9. **Anti-diabetics**—including oral forms of glipizide and glyburide—can cause a major drop in blood sugar levels of affected pets. Clinical signs of ingestion include disorientation, lack of coordination and seizures.
10. **Vitamin D derivatives** -- Even small exposures to Vitamin D formulas like calcipotriene and calcitriol can cause life-threatening spikes in blood calcium levels in pets. Vomiting, loss of appetite, increased urination and thirst due to kidney failure—often don't occur for more than 24 hours after ingestion.
11. **Baclofen** is a muscle relaxant commonly used for patients with multiple sclerosis, diseases of the spinal cord, Parkinson's disease, and Huntington's chorea. Just a small amount causes severe poisoning that can impair the central nervous systems of cats and dogs. Effects include significant depression, disorientation, vocalization, seizures and coma, which can lead to death.
12. **Caffeine** – used in many weight loss products as well as in common beverages, this chemical is dangerous to pets. Ingestion of moderate amounts of coffee grounds, tea bags or 1-2 diet pills can lead to hyperactivity, restlessness, vomiting, elevated heart rate, body temperature and /or blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythms, tremors, and seizures possibly ending in collapse and death.



Getting Rid of Unneeded Medicine *(continued from page 1)*

The Department's Drug Control Division developed the local medication drop box program, by which municipalities can provide a safe and secure place for residents to drop off their unneeded prescription and non-prescription drugs (see page 4). Similarly, many towns offer annual "drug take-back days" where you can turn in unused medication, and it is properly and safely disposed of by the municipality. Call your town hall or visit your city's website to see if and when a "takeback" event is planned.

Probably most convenient of all, you can also put unneeded medicine out to the curb or in your dumpster for regular trash pickup -- AFTER you make it unattractive to scavengers and secure it from easy access. Here's how:

1. **Contain:** Keep medication in its original container. Cross out any identifying information (patient name, drug name) with a dark marker or duct tape. (Chemotherapy drugs may need special handling. Ask your healthcare provider about proper disposal.)
2. **Change:** Alter the medication somehow to make it unpleasant and unattractive to people or animals as something to eat. For example, add water to pills or capsules to partially dissolve them, then add any combination of salt, flour, charcoal, coffee grounds or strong spices to make a pungent, unattractive mixture. You can modify liquid medication the same way. Don't mix medicine in discarded food or food containers, because animals could be attracted to eat them. Wrap blister packages of pills in multiple layers of duct tape or other opaque tape.
3. **Seal and conceal:** Secure the cover of the container containing the medicine with duct tape. Place the taped container in an opaque bag or plastic tub so that contents cannot be seen, and then simply toss the container in your dumpster or trash can for pickup. See our [YouTube video](#) for a demonstration.

Department Receives 2015 Leadership Award From Tribuna



Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, Tribuna Editor Emanuela Leaf, DCP Chief of Education & Outreach Catherine Blinder, Executive Asst. to Commissioner Julia Imperato and Commissioner Jonathan A. Harris at the American Dream Awards presentation on May 16th.

In 2014, Tribuna Newspaper began a partnership with the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) in order to educate its readers on their rights as consumers. Through a series of bi-weekly columns covering a wide range of consumer issues, Catherine Blinder, Chief Education and Outreach Officer, has been able to reach the Tribuna's readers, in the large immigrant populations in Danbury, Waterbury, Naugatuck, Bridgeport and the surrounding towns. The free newspaper is trilingual, and every column is printed concurrently in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

At the Tribuna's American Dream Awards on May 16th, the Department was honored with the Leadership Award for its commitment

to educating and improving the lives of all of the state's residents, including those whose first language may not be English.

Over the last year and a half, columns have covered topics such as how to assure online safety for teenagers, remittance or money transfer safety, driving schools, how to choose a home improvement contractor, the importance of financial education, elder fraud, debt collection, medical marijuana, buying a car, and many other relevant consumer issues. For the many Spanish or Portuguese-speaking Tribuna readers, having easy access to this kind of in-depth information on issues that directly impact their lives and the lives of their families, is crucially important.

According to the 2012 American Community Survey, of the state's 3.6 million residents, 495,421 are foreign born -- a robust 13.8 percent -- giving our small state the 13th-highest percentage of immigrant residents in the nation. Connecticut Voices for Children estimates that between 1995 and 2025, the state will have gained 337,000 residents through international migration, which just adds to the millions who have journeyed here from England, Ireland, Italy, France, Germany, Finland, Poland, Russia, and other countries over the centuries and made it their home.

The state's immigrant Latino population is currently its fastest-growing, expanding at a rate nearly 12 times the rest of the state. In the first decade of the 21st century alone, it has increased 59.9 percent. Connecticut is home to significant groups of immigrants from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Columbia. And Danbury is home to the largest Brazilian population in the state.

"At DCP we recognize that in order to educate and inform all of the state's residents, we must look beyond what has historically been done in terms of education and outreach and respond to what is real now, in 2015," Consumer Protection Commissioner Jonathan A. Harris said. "One way to increase our impact is to reach out to the ethnic media in Connecticut and surrounding states with our messages. We are proud of our partnership with Tribuna Newspaper and humbled by their recognition of our efforts."

"We also need community and state partners in this effort in order to identify and reach the most vulnerable and socially isolated of our state's residents -- to assure that they have access to information that allows them to protect themselves and their families," Harris concluded.

Water Safety Begins With You!

The Department of Consumer Protection wants everyone to have an accident-free summer. Water safety is especially important this time of year, and supervising children around water is essential, at home or at public pools, lakes and beaches.

Designate a responsible adult to watch young children at all times in and around water. Supervising requires focus and attention; don't be on the phone or reading a book when it's your turn to watch the children.

In a few seconds, hair can become entrapped in pool or hot tub suction outlets, so bathing caps are suggested for anyone with long hair.

Secure, surround and lock your backyard pool area. A four-sided pool fence that totally separates the pool area from the house and yard is best. Latches should be higher than young children can reach.

Keep the pool area free from toys that could lure young children back to the pool when not in use. Don't leave ladders or benches in a place where youngsters can use them to reach the gate latch.

Floating toys such as rafts and "noodles" should not be used by non-swimmers unless they also wear a Coast Guard approved life preserver. These toys are dangerous when multiple children are in the water, as they can obstruct the supervising adult's view of everyone.

Promote the buddy system. Make it a family habit and backyard rule to always "swim with a buddy."

Teach children to swim. Swimming lessons can protect young children from drowning.

However, even when children have had formal swimming lessons, effective barriers and constant observation and supervision when children are in the water, and are still crucial.

Medication Drop Boxes Now in 58 Towns Across Connecticut

The following municipalities have, or will soon have, medication drop boxes. These boxes are secured in the lobby of the police department, and are accessible anytime the department is open. No questions asked; just drop the unwanted medications in and they will be safely and securely destroyed. You can block out any identifying information on the label. No sharps, thermometers, hazardous waste or personal care items (e.g., shampoo) please.

ANSONIA POLICE DEPARTMENT 2 ELM ST ANSONIA	FARMINGTON POLICE DEPT 319 NEW BRITAIN AVE UNIONVILLE	NEWINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 131 CEDAR ST NEWINGTON	STRATFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT 900 LONGBROOK AVE STRATFORD
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT 49 PLUMTREES RD BETHEL	GREENWICH POLICE DEPT 11 BRUCE PL GREENWICH	NEWTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT 3 MAIN ST NEWTOWN	TORRINGTON POLICE DEPT 576 MAIN ST TORRINGTON
BLOOMFIELD POLICE DEPT 785 PARK AVE BLOOMFIELD	GUILFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT 400 CHURCH ST GUILFORD	NORWALK DEPARTMENT OF POLICE 1 MONROE ST NORWALK	TOWN OF GROTON POLICE DEPT 68 GROTON LONG POINT RD GROTON
BROOKFIELD POLICE DEPT 63 SILVERMINE RD BROOKFIELD	HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT 253 HIGH ST HARTFORD	NORWICH POLICE DEPARTMENT 70 THAMES ST NORWICH	TRUMBULL POLICE DEPARTMENT 158 EDISON RD TRUMBULL
CANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 45 RIVER RD COLLINSVILLE	LEDYARD POLICE DEPARTMENT 11 LORENZ PARKWAY LEDYARD	PLAINVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT 19 NEAL CT PLAINVILLE	VERNON POLICE DEPARTMENT 725 HARTFORD TPKE VERNON
CHESHIRE POLICE UNION 500 HIGHLAND AVE CHESHIRE	MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT 9 CAMPUS DR MADISON	PUTNAM POLICE DEPARTMENT 189 CHURCH ST PUTNAM	WATERBURY POLICE DEPT 255 E MAIN ST WATERBURY
CITY OF GROTON POLICE DEPT 295 MERIDIAN ST GROTON	MANCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT 239 MIDDLE TPKE E MANCHESTER	REDDING POLICE DEPARTMENT 96 HILL RD REDDING	WATERFORD POLICE DEPT 41 AVERY LN WATERFORD
CLINTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 170 E MAIN ST CLINTON	MERIDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT 50 WEST MAIN ST MERIDEN	RIDGEFIELD POLICE DEPT 76 EAST RDG RIDGEFIELD	WATERTOWN POLICE DEPT 195 FRENCH ST WATERTOWN
COLCHESTER RES TROOPER 127 NORWICH AVE COLCHESTER	MONTVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT 911 NORWICH NEW LONDON TPK UNCASVILLE	SHELTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 85 WHEELER ST SHELTON	WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT 50 JESUP RD WESTPORT
COVENTRY POLICE DEPT 1585 MAIN ST COVENTRY	NAUGATUCK POLICE DEPARTMENT 211 SPRING ST NAUGATUCK	SIMSBURY POLICE DEPARTMENT PO BOX 495 SIMSBURY	WILLIMANTIC POLICE DEPT 22 MEADOW ST WILLIMANTIC
DARIEN POLICE DEPARTMENT 25 HECKER AVE DARIEN	NEW CANAAN POLICE DEPARTMENT 174 SOUTH AVE NEW CANAAN	SOMERS POLICE DEPARTMENT 451 MAIN ST SOMERS	WILTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 240 DANBURY RD WILTON
EAST HARTFORD POLICE DEPT 31 SCHOOL ST E HARTFORD	NEW HAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT 1 UNION AVE NEW HAVEN	SOUTH WINDSOR POLICE DEPT 151 SAND HILL RD SOUTH WINDSOR	WINDSOR LOCKS POLICE DEPT 4 VOLUNTEER DR WINDSOR LOCKS
EAST LYME POLICE DEPT 278 MAIN ST NIAN TIC	NEW LONDON POLICE DEPARTMENT 5 GOVERNOR WINTHROP BLVD NEW LONDON	SOUTHINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 69 LAZY LN SOUTHINGTON	WINCHESTER POLICE DEPT 338 MAIN ST WINSTED (COMING SOON)
ENFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT 293 ELM ST ENFIELD	NEW MILFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT 49 POPLAR ST NEW MILFORD	STAFFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT 2 MAIN ST STAFFORD SPRINGS	WOLCOTT POLICE DEPT 225 NICHOLS RD WOLCOTT
FAIRFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT 100 REEF RD FAIRFIELD		STONINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 173 S BROAD ST PAWCATUCK	

Medical Marijuana Program Update

The Department is drafting regulations to add three new conditions to those that qualify for use of medical marijuana. The conditions, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's Disease), Fabry Disease, and Ulcerative Colitis, were reviewed and voted upon by the Medical Marijuana Program's Board of Physicians in April.

This brings the total number of potential new illnesses to six. The agency also began the process to add Sickle Cell Disease, Post Laminectomy Syndrome with Chronic Radiculopathy, and Severe Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis to the list that qualify for palliative use of medical marijuana. The regulation review process for all conditions will include a hearing and public comment period before the proposed regulation is sent to the Attorney General for review and then to the General Assembly's Regulation Review Committee for a final vote.