

PPCPs in Stormwater



What are PPCPs?

PPCP stands for Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products. This group of chemicals includes prescription drugs and medications, over-the-counter drugs and medications, and non-medical consumer products. In this poster, we will be discussing personal care products. Check out the infographics on pharmaceuticals and hormone-impacting pharmaceuticals for more information.

Examples of Personal Care Products:

Perfume • Face and Body Wash • Moisturizers • Sunscreen • Cosmetics • Lotion • Nail Polish • Toothpaste • Shampoo • Conditioner • Deodorant

Growing Concern: Personal Care Products

Over the last several years, personal care products have started to be viewed as possible environmental pollutants. Currently, scientists' main concerns surrounding personal care products are possible increases in resistance to antibiotics and endocrine disruption. While these contaminants are generally found at very small concentrations in surface and ground water, it is unknown whether or not those concentrations can accumulate in human and aquatic life.

Although the level of risk is unclear, it is generally good to be aware of the possible toxins in your personal care products and how to dispose of them properly. In order to make the process easier, many public interest groups, such as the Environmental Working Group (EWG), have begun to make databases in which consumers can enter their specific personal care products and determine what risk, if any, those products pose. The easiest way to prevent these contaminants from entering stormwater is proper disposal and research. See the boxes to the right for more tips.

1

DON'T FLUSH

Properly dispose of personal care products Do NOT flush them down the toilet or drain. Check the container or the product's website for instructions.

2

RESEARCH

Read the labels on your products. Look up ingredients you don't recognize. Use a public database to see the different substances in your products and how they might affect you.

Citations

Environmental Working Group database:

<https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>

Safe Cosmetics database:

<http://www.safecosmetics.org/get-the-facts/chem-of-concern/>

Other Resources:

“Contaminants of Emerging Concern Including Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products.” EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, 1 Sept. 2020, www.epa.gov/wqc/contaminants-emerging-concern-including-pharmaceuticals-and-personal-care-products.

Keller, Amy. “Personal Care Products: How Safe Are Our Cosmetics?” Consumer Notice, 28 July 2020, www.consumernotice.org/products/personal-care/.

“Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products (PPCPs) in the Environment.” Illinois Sustainable Technology Center: Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois, www.istc.illinois.edu/research/pollutants/PPCPs_in_the_environment.

Stahl, Leanne. “Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) in Fish: Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products (PPCPs).” EPA, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Sept. 2013, www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-11/documents/cecs-ppcps-factsheet.pdf.

“Toxicological Issues Associated With PPCPs.” Department of Toxic Substances Control, State of California, dtsc.ca.gov/pharmaceutical-waste/toxicological-issues-associated-with-ppcps/.

