

Recycling Remedy for Empty Pill Bottles

One of the questions Monroe County Solid Waste educators often hear:

“Are prescription bottles – colored and white - recyclable in my home recycling bin?”

The answer is:

- **colored bottles** that prescriptions come in – **NO** (but can be brought to the ecopark for proper disposal)
- **white bottles** that contain vitamins and supplements – **YES**



Why are **colored prescription bottles not acceptable for recycling?**

- In the majority of cases, the bottles are so small they will not make it through the sorting system
- Bottles end up crushed and in the residue (garbage) which is sent to the landfill
- Crushed pieces can end up in the paper stream – since 80% of recycling in Monroe County is paper, paper needs protection from contaminants
- There is the possibility that actual containers with pharmaceuticals would be put in curbside bins and could pose a health hazard to recycling workers

EMPTY colored prescription bottles can be brought to the Monroe County / Waste Management ecopark for proper disposal

- If you are uncomfortable with personal information on the bottle, remove the label OR black out information with a Sharpie marker

PRO TIP: Keep a bag with your recycling for empty bottles and bring it to the ecopark when full

What happens to the colored bottles collected at the ecopark?

- Along with pharmaceuticals collected at the ecopark and by various law enforcement agencies, colored prescription bottles are incinerated at a waste-to-energy plant, where they are converted into electricity or steam to power homes and businesses

EMPTY white pharmaceutical bottles (such as those that contain vitamins and supplements) ARE RECYCLABLE curbside

- Unlike the tinted containers, these will not shatter when making their way through the sorting system at the Monroe County Recycling Center and can be recycled with plastics from your home such as bottles, jugs, jars and tubs

Don't forget: The Monroe County / Waste Management ecopark provides a **FREE safe and proper way to dispose of unused or unwanted medications twice a week, every week**, (excluding holidays) during normal business hours - **Wednesday 1 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. and Saturday, 7:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. Drive in and drop off, NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY!**

Medication disposal is also available throughout the County in cooperation with many local law enforcement agencies. **Remember: don't flush!**

For more information, visit <https://www.monroecounty.gov/ecopark/pharmaceutical.php>