

Drug Disposal Guidelines

1. Follow any specific disposal instructions on the drug label or patient information that accompanies the medication. Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet unless this information specifically instructs you to do so.
2. Take advantage of community drug take-back programs that allow the public to bring unused drugs to a central location for proper disposal. Call your city or county government's household trash and recycling service (see blue pages in phone book) to see if a take-back program is available in your community. The Drug Enforcement Administration, working with state and local law enforcement agencies, is sponsoring National Prescription Drug Take Back Days throughout the United States.

FDA's Deputy Director of the Office of Compliance Ilisa Bernstein, Pharm.D., J.D., offers some additional tips:

1. Before throwing out a medicine container, scratch out all identifying information on the prescription label to make it unreadable. This will help protect your identity and the privacy of your personal health information.
2. Do not give medications to friends. Doctors prescribe drugs based on a person's specific symptoms and medical history. A drug that works for you could be dangerous for someone else.
3. When in doubt about proper disposal, talk to your pharmacist.

The same disposal methods for prescription drugs could apply to over-the-counter drugs as well.

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