

Medication Disposal



Why should I get rid of unused or expired medication?

Unused or expired medication that is not properly thrown away can be harmful for your pets, family, and community. They may lead to accidental poisoning, overdose, or misuse and may pollute our soil and water. Properly throwing away unused or expired medication saves lives and protects the environment.

How do I properly throw away unused or expired medication?

The proper way to get rid of unused or expired medication is to bring it to a drug take back location. A take back location is a place that will take your unused or expired medication and throw it away for you. Remove any personal information from the packaging before you drop them off. Drug take back locations can be found by using the search tool on the DEA website (www.DEATakeBack.com). You can also dispose of your medications at the CHLA Specialty Outpatient Pharmacy in the drop box located in the lobby.



Although it is best to use a drug take back location, many medications may be thrown away in regular household trash, if done properly.

How do I throw away medication at home?

When throwing away medications (pills, liquids, drops, patches, creams) make sure to follow these steps:

1. Remove all personal information on the label or packaging.
2. Mix medications with dirt, cat litter, or unused coffee grounds.
3. Place the mixture in a closed container such as a sealed plastic bag or an empty bottle. The medication mixture should not spill or leak out of the sealed container.
4. Place the sealed container with the medication mixture in the trash.

How should I get rid of hazardous medications, controlled medications, or Sharps waste?

Hazardous medications, controlled medications, and Sharps waste all have special requirements for disposal.

- **Hazardous Medications** – These medications have the potential to cause harm if not handled or disposed of properly. Many cancer, hormonal, and transplant medications are hazardous. Look for the word “hazardous” on your prescription label or ask your pharmacist if you are unsure. These medications should be taken to a drug take back location, NOT thrown away at home.



Pharmacy

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- **Controlled Medications** – These medications may cause accidental poisoning, overdose, and abuse if not properly discarded. An example of a controlled medication is oxycodone. They can be thrown away in regular household trash using the directions listed above or taken to a drug take back location. However, some may also be flushed down the toilet. You can find a list of flushable medications on the FDA website (www.fda.gov) or ask your pharmacist.
- **Sharps** – Sharps materials, such as needles and lancets, are used to pierce or poke the skin. Sharps waste should be thrown out in a Sharps bin or puncture-resistant container, NOT in regular household trash. Once the container is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, seal it securely. Sharps waste should be taken to a drop-off location or use a product specific mail-back program.