

# How do I properly dispose of medications?

Managing unused medications is a safety as well as an environmental concern. Clean out your medicine cabinet to prevent accidental ingestion by children or pets and abuse or misuse. Proper disposal will prevent medications from entering soil and groundwater. The Board of Pharmacy encourages you to consider the following guidelines when disposing of medications:



1. Remove all medications from their original containers. Scratch out or remove all identifying information on the prescription label on the original container to protect your identity and the privacy of your personal health information before throwing it away.
2. Place the medications in an impermeable, non-descript container (such as an empty laundry detergent bottle or coffee can), and mix with water or coffee to dissolve the medications.
3. Mix with an undesirable substance such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter (the medication will be less appealing to children and pets, and unrecognizable to people who may intentionally go through your trash). Tightly seal the container and throw it away.

According to the FDA, *"there is a small number of medicines that may be especially harmful and, in some cases, fatal with just one dose if they are used by someone other than the person for whom the medicine was prescribed. To prevent accidental ingestion by children, pets, or anyone else, a few medicines have specific disposal instructions indicating they should be flushed down the sink or toilet as soon as they are no longer needed, and when they cannot be disposed of through a medicine take-back program."* [Click here](#) for a list of medicines recommended for disposal by flushing.

<http://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucm186187.htm#MEDICINES>