

SAFE DISPOSAL OF MEDICATIONS

It is important to take the right precautions when disposing of unwanted and expired medications. This guidance describes safe options for doing so.

BEST OPTION: DRUG DISPOSAL KIOSKS AND TAKE-BACK EVENTS

To dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medications safely, you can drop them in a permanent drug disposal kiosk. Disposal kiosks may be found in community pharmacies, police stations, or other law enforcement facilities. You can also call your city or county government's household trash and recycling service and ask about drug take-back programs and household hazardous waste collection days. For information on drug take back locations (including permanent drop boxes) in North Carolina, please visit the Drug Disposal Locator provided by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy here:

<https://nabp.pharmacy/initiatives/awarxe/drug-disposal-locator/>

HOUSEHOLD DISPOSAL

If you cannot dispose unwanted medications in a kiosk, here are suggestions safe disposal at home.

Follow these simple steps to dispose of medicines in the household trash

MIX
Mix medicines (do not crush tablets or capsules) **with an unpalatable substance** such as dirt, kitty litter, or used coffee grounds;

PLACE
Place the mixture **in a container** such as a sealed plastic bag;

THROW
Throw the container **in your household trash**;

SCRATCH OUT
Scratch out **all personal information** on the prescription label of your empty pill bottle or empty medicine packaging to make it unreadable, then dispose of the container.

Source: <https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/>

Some pharmacies may provide or sell a product that can safely deactivate medications to allow safe disposal in household trash. Ask your local pharmacist for recommendations.

WHAT ABOUT FLUSHING UNWANTED MEDICATIONS?

In general, flushing medications is not an environmentally friendly means of medication disposal. So, whenever possible, avoid flushing unwanted medications to protect water quality.

There are, however, a small number of medicines that may be especially harmful and, in some cases, fatal with just one dose if 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 that they 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.

Those medications are listed here:

<https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm576167.htm>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy provides good resource information on prescription drug disposal here: <https://nabp.pharmacy/initiatives/aware/dispose-safely/>

For more information on safe disposal of medications from the Food and Drug Administration, click here:

<https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/default.htm>

You may also contact the North Carolina Board of Pharmacy by phone, (919) 246-1050; or visit the Board's website at www.ncbop.org for more information.

Pharmacies wishing to learn more about modifying their DEA registration to take back controlled substances may contact the Greensboro DEA office at (336) 547-4219, find more information at <https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov>, and on the Board of Pharmacy website, www.ncbop.org