If you’re like most people, your medicine cabinet is full of prescription and over-the-counter medications.....

Are you holding on to unwanted, unused, or expired medication? Do you know how to dispose of them safely? This handout will answer those questions and more.

The easiest way to dispose of medicine is through a community drop-off program. If one is not available in your area, there are easy steps you can take to properly dispose of medications at home.

Cleaning out your medicine cabinet is an important step in protecting your family’s health. Check all medication’s expiration date. Do not hold on to expired or unused medication. It is best to destroy of these immediately.

First, scratch out or mark over your personal information on the medicine bottle, including address, telephone number, and patient’s name. Any information that could be used to steal your identity.

The next step is to destroy or alter the medication so that it’s no longer usable. This can be done in a variety of ways, but is usually done by crushing the medication or by adding substances that will change it’s taste. For example, you can add salt, flour, or other spices to liquid medicine, and mix or crush pills with coffee grounds, used kitty litter or other undesirable substances. This will prevent anyone from wanting to use them.

After destroying the medication you will need to seal the bottle with strong tape such as duct or packing tape. This will ensure the container from leaking after disposal.

The final step in the disposal process is to disguise the drugs in a non-transparent container or sealable bags. These could include an old margarine tub, other plastic container, or bag. Then place this in the nearest trash collection site on pick-up day!

Following these guidelines will help keep your family, the community and the environment safe.

**Safely Dispose of Medications at Home**

1. Scratch out or use permanent marker to cover patient’s name and personal information.

2. Crush or mix the medication with salt, coffee grounds, or kitty litter to destroy the drug and make it undesirable.

3. Seal container using strong tape such as duct tape or clear packing tape.

4. Disguise drugs by putting them in non-transparent containers or sealable bags and place them in the nearest trash collection site.

*Most prescription and even some over-the-counter medications come with disposal recommendations. Check these guidelines or consult your pharmacist. Otherwise destroy, seal, and trash unwanted, unused, or expired medications.*
What all Parents Need to Know...

Prescription Drug Abuse Rising Among Youth

Illegal drug use is declining among youth, while the abuse of prescription drugs, especially pain relievers, is increasing. Many teens abuse prescription drugs, readily available in their families medicine cabinet; thinking these drugs are safe. They don’t know that taking them without a prescription to get high or “self-medicate” can be as dangerous – and addictive – as using street narcotics and other illicit drugs.

According to a study released in 2008 by Partnership for a Drug-Free America.
- 1 in 5 teens has abused a prescription pain medication
- 1 in 5 report abusing prescription stimulants and tranquilizers
- 1 in 10 has abused cough medication

Always keep prescription medication in a locked cabinet or box!!!

What’s in your medicine cabinet?

For more information on Substance Abuse Prevention and Rx Drug Disposal visit these Websites

Websites for Parents
- www.theantidrug.com
- www.drugfree.org
- www.family.samhsa.gov
- www.samhsa.gov/rxsafety
- www.fda.gov

Find Local Resources
- www.ocbhs.org/sasvcs.htm
- www.healthyCarteret.org
- www.nccarelink.com

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