

# How to Dispose of Prescription Medicines & Over-The-Counter (OTC) Products



**Are you throwing away unused medications and over-the-counter products down the toilet or the sink? STOP!**

Flushing medications down the toilet or sink causes water pollution, impacts drinking water and has adverse effects on septic systems, fish and other aquatic wildlife.

**The safe way to dispose of medications and OTC products is to put them in the trash.**

Here's how to do it:

## 1. Keep the medication in its original container.

- To protect privacy and discourage misuse of the prescription, cross out the patient's name with a **permanent marker or duct tape or remove the label.** (Chemotherapy drugs may require special handling. Work with your healthcare provider on proper disposal options for this type of medication.)



## 2. Modify the medications to discourage consumption.



- For solid medications: such as pills or capsules: add a small amount of water to at least partially dissolve them.
- For liquid medications: add enough table salt, flour, charcoal, or nontoxic powdered spice, such as turmeric or mustard to make a pungent, unsightly mixture that discourages anyone from eating it.
- For blister packs: wrap the blister packages containing pills in multiple layers of duct or other opaque tape.

## 3. Seal and conceal.

- Tape the medication container lid shut with packing or duct tape.
- Place it inside a non-transparent bag or container such as an empty yogurt or margarine tub to ensure that the contents cannot be seen.
- **Do not** conceal medicines in food products because animals could inadvertently consume them.



## 4. Discard the container in your trash can. ***Do not put the container in your recycling bin!***



For more information, please contact:  
Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Pollution Prevention  
79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106 (860) 424-3297 [www.ct.gov/dep/p2](http://www.ct.gov/dep/p2)

For information on disposal of medical supplies such as thermometers and syringes, go to [http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2708&q=335480&depNav\\_GID=1763](http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2708&q=335480&depNav_GID=1763)

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