

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

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

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