

## DISPOSING OF UNUSED MEDICINES

Medicines play an important role in treating many conditions and diseases. When they are no longer needed, it is important to dispose of them properly to reduce harm from accidental exposure or intentional misuse. Below, we list some options and special instructions for you to consider when disposing of expired, unwanted, or unused medicines.

### Transfer Unused Medicine to Authorized Collectors for Disposal

Consumers and caregivers should remove expired, unwanted, or unused medicines from their home as quickly as possible to help reduce the chance that others may accidentally take or intentionally misuse the unneeded medicine.

Medicine take-back programs are a good way to safely dispose of most types of unneeded medicines. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) periodically hosts National Prescription Drug Take-Back events where collection sites are set up in communities nationwide for safe disposal of prescription drugs.

The South Plainfield Police Department hosts a collection site every year in April and October. The collection is held in the South Plainfield Courtroom in Borough Hall, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. Check the Borough website home page for announcements of the spring and fall Take-Back Day dates. This program is anonymous. To assist in safe and successful drug destruction, the following rules should be observed:

Drugs may be dropped directly into the disposal box or left in their original containers.

If drugs are left in the original container, remove any personal identifying information.

Liquid products should remain sealed in their original container.

Syringes and other sharp instruments will not be accepted.

Another option for consumers and long-term care facilities, like nursing homes, to dispose of unneeded medicines is to transfer unused medicines to collectors registered with the Drug Enforcement Agency. DEA-authorized collectors safely and securely collect and dispose of pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances and other medicines. The DEA-authorized collector closest to South Plainfield is Devine's Pharmacy at 1949 Oak Tree Road, Edison. The pharmacist there can help residents to safely dispose of their unused medicines.

Consumers can visit the [DEA's website](#) for more information about drug disposal, [National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day events](#) and to locate a [DEA-authorized collector](#) in their area. Consumers may also call the DEA Office of Diversion Control's Registration Call Center at 1-800-882-9539 to find an authorized collector in their community.

### Disposal in Household Trash



As an alternative to the DEA-sponsored programs, you can also follow these simple steps to dispose of most medicines in the household trash:

1. Mix medicines (do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as dirt, kitty litter, or used coffee grounds;
2. Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag
3. Throw the container in your household trash;
4. 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.

## Flushing

Most medicines should not be flushed down the toilet, to avoid adding to the concentration of pharmaceuticals already present in our surface waters. However, some pharmaceuticals are considered so hazardous that they should be removed as quickly as possible from the home when they are no longer needed. These include narcotics like hydrocodone. The fentanyl patch, an adhesive patch that delivers a potent pain medicine through the skin, comes with instructions to flush used or leftover patches. Too much fentanyl can cause severe breathing problems and lead to death in babies, children, pets and even adults, especially those who have not been prescribed the medicine.

Find lists of medicines recommended for flushing on the FDA's website

<https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm#recommend>

Note: the above information, except for details relating to South Plainfield's program, were taken from the FDA's website at

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



More technical information can be found on the Drug Enforcement Administration's site at

[https://www.dea.gov/diversion/usdoj/drug\\_disposal/index.html](https://www.dea.gov/diversion/usdoj/drug_disposal/index.html)

