Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs

Office of National Drug Control Policy October 2009

Federal Guidelines:

- Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet or drain unless the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs you to do so. For information on drugs that should be flushed visit the FDA's website.

- To dispose of prescription drugs not labeled to be flushed, you may be able to take advantage of community drug take-back programs or other programs, such as household hazardous waste collection events, that collect drugs at a central location for proper disposal. Call your city or county government's household trash and recycling service and ask if a drug take-back program is available in your community.

- If a drug take-back or collection program is not available:

  1. Take your prescription drugs out of their original containers.

  2. Mix drugs with an undesirable substance, such as cat litter or used coffee grounds.

  3. Put the mixture into a disposable container with a lid, such as an empty margarine tub, or into a sealable bag.

  4. Conceal or remove any personal information, including Rx number, on the empty containers by covering it with black permanent marker or duct tape, or by scratching it off.

  5. Place the sealed container with the mixture, and the empty drug containers, in the trash.

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