

How to Throw Away Old Medicines and Injectable Products

How do I prepare my old and unused medicines to throw them away?

1. Take your medicines out of their original containers.
2. Scratch off your name and the Rx number or cover them with black permanent marker. Throw away the containers.
3. Mix the medicines with something no person or animal would bother. Cat litter or coffee grounds are good.
4. Put the mixture into a container with a lid, such as an empty margarine tub or a sealable bag, and throw it away.
5. Do not flush prescription medicines down the toilet or pour them in a drain unless the label tells you it is okay.



How do I dispose of unused, expired, or discontinued injectable products?

Put the injectable product in a sharps disposal container. If you need help getting a sharps disposal container, contact your pharmacist.

Do not overfill a sharps container. When your sharps container is about three-quarters full, follow your community guidelines for getting rid of the container.

Sharps disposal guidelines and programs vary depending on where you live. When possible, purchase sharps containers that come with mail back boxes for disposal by the company. You can also check with your local trash removal services or health department to see what methods are used where you live.



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What are injectable products?

Injectable products include:

- needles and pen needles
- syringes
- auto injectors and pens (pre-filled devices)
- vials containing an injectable product.



Why is getting rid of old and unused medicines so important?

- They can be harmful to children.
- Anyone can have an accidental overdose.
- Too many medicine bottles can be confusing in a medicine cabinet.
- Teens and young adults might abuse them because they believe it is a safe way to get high.
- Medicines can hurt the environment. Scientists have found small amounts of many medicines in drinking water supplies across the country. This is mainly because people flush them down the toilet or pour them in a drain.

Where can I take old or unused medicines?

- **Drop-off site.** There may be a drop-off site near you. See if your police department can take them.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.nashville.gov/Public-Works/Neighborhood-Services/Special-Hazardous-Waste/Pharmaceuticals.aspx>

- **National Take Back Day.** Sometimes the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) holds a National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

For more information go to:

[http://www.dea.gov/diversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html](http://www.dea.gov/diversion/usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html)

Why can't I bring old or unused medicines back to Vanderbilt?

Tennessee does not allow clinics, pharmacies, or their staff members to receive and throw away these medicines. If we accept them, we are breaking the law.