

Proper Disposal and Handling

Safe Disposal and Travel Tips to Ensure Safety

It's important to safely dispose of medications. For example, throwing needles into the trash or flushing medication down the toilet can cause risk of injury or potential infection to others. Use these safe disposal and handling options at home and when traveling.



Safe Disposal of Discontinued, Expired or Unused Medication

- Follow any specific disposal instructions on the prescription drug labeling.
- Do not flush medication down the sink or toilet unless instructed to do so by a medical professional.
- Take advantage of community programs that will dispose the drugs for you. Call your local garbage or recycling service for help.
- Call your doctor or pharmacist for help in finding a way to safely dispose of your medication.
- If no disposal instructions are given on the drug labeling and no take-back program is available, discard medication in household trash. Simply remove drugs from original container, mix with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds, and place in a sealable bag or container.
- Scratch out identifying information on the prescription label to protect your identity and the privacy of your personal health information.



Safe Disposal of Needles, Syringes and Lancets (Sharps*)

- Take filled sharps containers to appropriate collection sites in the community to prevent sharps from entering the household waste stream.
- Products are available and designed to clip, melt or burn the needle allowing the sharps user to throw the syringe or plunger in the garbage.
- Place used sharps in a special container and mail to a collection site for proper disposal.
- Many manufacturers offer nationwide or limited sharps disposal programs free-of-charge.



Traveling with Sharps*

- Carry a copy of your prescriptions in your carry-on, purse or wallet.
- Keep your medications with you at all times. Medications should not be packed in a checked bag.
- If you are taking injectable medications, do not remove syringes or medication from the original packaging in order to help airport security identify supplies.
- If you are traveling to a foreign country, check for guidelines or instructions regarding disposal of sharps*.
- Know the temperature controls required for your medication. You may need to carry a small cooler with ice pack to transport your medication if it is normally stored in the refrigerator.

* Always consult with your local or community guidelines to ensure proper disposal of sharps.

Helpful Links

- ▶ [Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal](#)
- ▶ [Transportation Security Administration](#)
- ▶ [U.S. Food & Drug - How to Dispose of Unused Medicines](#)