

DISPOSING OF YOUR MEDICATIONS  
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I was recently at a meeting where two local pharmacists were speaking about medication diversion which is becoming a real issue in our local communities. People are abusing prescription medications at an alarming rate. Many of the local drug related deaths are due to prescription medications, not street drugs. It is important that each of us take the appropriate steps to dispose of our prescription medications, in order to decrease the chances of them falling into the wrong hands.

What are the most common ways medication diversion occurs?

1. A person has a legitimate prescription for a medication, yet only takes half of their ordered dose and sells the other half.
2. A person steals medications from their family, friends or acquaintances.
3. A person working in a medical facility steals medications from their patients.

What are some tips to prevent medication diversion from occurring in my home?

1. Do not keep your prescription medications sitting out in plain sight. Store all medicines in one designated location together. The location should be a dry and cool place. The kitchen and bathroom are bad places to store medicine because of the heat and moisture generated, and also because it will be the first places a person seeking medications will look for them.
2. Do not share prescriptions prescribed to you with others.
3. Take unused, unneeded or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers and throw them in the trash. Do not hang onto medications that you are no longer taking.
4. Mixing prescription medications with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and putting them in impermeable, non-descript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags, will further ensure the drugs are not diverted.
5. Flush prescription medications down the toilet if the label or accompanying patient information instructs you to do so. The FDA advises the following medications be flushed down the toilet instead of throwing them into the trash: actiq (fentanyl citrate), daytrana transdermal patch (methylphenidate), duragesic transdermal system (fentanyl), oxycontin tablet (oxycodone), avinza capsules (morphine sulfate), meperidine hcl tablets, baraclude tablets (entecavir), reyataz capsules (atazanavir sulfate), tequin tablets (gatifloxacin), zerit for oral solution (stavudine), percocet (oxycodone and acetaminophen), xyrem (sodium oxybate) and fentora (fentanyl buccal tablet).

Information for this article was obtained from [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov).