
Visit www.productstewardship.us/GoToGuide for:

- Ready-to-print patient education posters, brochures, and more
- Info on the dangers of unused meds
- How to safely dispose meds
- Drug drop-off locations near you
- How to increase safe drug take-back opportunities in your area



NYPSC
NEW YORK PRODUCT
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

This material is based upon work supported under a grant by the Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Rural Utilities Service.

The Product Stewardship Institute, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

IT'S NOT JUST OPIOIDS: All unused medications are a threat to health and safety

Here's what to tell your patients

What's Inside:

- How to talk to patients about their unused meds
- Quick facts on why unused drugs should NOT be stored at home, put in the trash, flushed, or poured down the drain
- Where to get ready-to-print patient education materials



QUICK FACTS

Unused drugs should not be stored in the home.

7 out of 10 people who start abusing prescription drugs get them from the medicine cabinets of friends and family.

Over 2/3 of patients report having prescription opioids left over after surgery. Most store them unlocked at home.

Among children, accidental drug poisoning is twice as common as poisoning from other products (e.g., cleaning solutions).

Adults, especially seniors, may accidentally take the wrong drugs, or take expired drugs that are less effective.

When used, "leftover" antibiotics may contribute to antibiotic resistance.

Unused drugs should not be put in the trash, flushed, or poured down the drain.

Antibiotics, anti-seizure medicines, mood stabilizers, sex hormones, and other drugs are present in waterways across the U.S.

Most wastewater treatment plants can't remove drugs. Drugs also leak out of landfills into soil and water.

Drugs change the fertility, growth, and behavior of fish, frogs, snails, and other animals.

TALKING POINTS: HOW TO DISPOSE OF UNUSED MEDS

Use these talking points to communicate with patients:

- Do you understand the importance of taking the full course of your medication?
- If you have any left over, do you know how to dispose of it safely?
- You should NEVER flush drugs or pour them down the drain because that pollutes the environment and ultimately our water supply.
- You can drop off unwanted meds for free, no questions asked at some pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, police stations, sheriff offices, narcotic treatment centers, and long-term care facilities. Make sure they can take your meds before you visit.
- Your town or county Health or Environment departments may also host drug collection events. Call or search online to find out.
- Some pharmacies offer postage-paid envelopes for free or for a fee. Use these envelopes to mail medicines to a safe disposal program.

