How to Properly Dispose of Medication

Prepared by the Health Consultant Team at Child Care Aware® of North Dakota

• Pouring medications down the sink or flushing them down the toilet is no longer routinely recommended because medication can cause pollution of lakes, streams, and water supplies.

• Follow specific disposal instructions on the drug label. Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet unless specifically instructed.

• Contact your local recycling program or pharmacy to see if they offer a medication “take-back” program. Visit http://www.disposemymeds.org/index.php/pharmacy-locator to locate participating pharmacies. Police Departments in Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot also participate in “take-back programs” by providing disposal containers in their lobbies for all unused prescriptions or OTC medication.

• If no instructions are given and no recycling program is available, throw the drugs in the trash, but first:
  • Take them out of their original container and mix them with undesirable substance such as coffee grounds or kitty litter.
  • Conceal or remove personal information, including Rx number, on the empty medicine containers by either covering it with black permanent marker or by scratching it off.
  • Wrap the medication mixture and the empty containers in newspaper to help conceal them from pets and children before placing in the trash.

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