



## PARENT PLUS

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Discard your prescription drugs safely

Prescription drugs are in the water, and you could be the cause.

Pharmaceuticals can be found in drinking water because they may not be absorbed by the body and then pass through human waste, or because unused medication is flushed down the toilet.

Fortunately, the trace amounts of drugs found in water don't have any harmful effects on humans, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Still, it's better to be safe than sorry when getting rid of unneeded or expired medications to protect children, pets and the environment.

The following tips from the FDA, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and SMARxT Disposal explain how to discard prescription and over-the-counter drugs safely:

- Always follow the disposal instructions printed on the drug label.
- Do *not* flush medications down the toilet or pour them down the drain if the instructions don't specifically ask you to do so.



If you throw medications in the trash, follow these steps:

- Take the medication out of the original container and pour it in a sealable bag or container.
- If the drugs are solid, crush them up and mix with water.
- Mix drugs with coffee grounds, kitty litter or any other unappetizing substance. This will stop curious children or pets from consuming the medication.
- All identifying marks, such as prescription names or health information, should be scratched off drug labels before throwing them away.
- If you aren't sure how you're supposed to throw away your prescription medication, ask your pharmacist.
- If available, dispose of your medication at a drug take-back program.

For more information, including which drugs the FDA recommends flushing down the toilet, visit [www.ondcp.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper\\_disposal.html](http://www.ondcp.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper_disposal.html).

— Asma Ahmad

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