

TOPIC:

Disposing of Unused Medication

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Micro Training Course Developed

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING CREDIT:

**Read through this self-study.*

**Fill out the "CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING" Questionnaire*

**Return to ACRF for 1.0 hour of training credit.*

When a youth's medication changes, is discontinued, or some other change occurs, resource families may find themselves with medications no longer approved to be administered to a youth. Additionally, other household members may also have medications no longer necessary to keep. Let's take a look at what is expected of resource families in this situation according to OCS foster care regulations and best practices. Current foster care regulations (7 AAC 10.1070 Medications) state that a resource parent needs to dispose of the medication in a way that prevents access to children. This means throwing the bottle into the kitchen garbage can is not likely to meet the regulatory standard. Additionally, the regulations also state that resource parents need to dispose of medications in accordance with the instructions of the medications manufacturer.

The US Food and Drug Administration provide us with some guidelines that are helpful for Alaska's resource parents.

-  When a medication is no longer needed, it should be disposed of immediately. This reduces the risk of it accidentally being given in place of a new medication as well as preventing unintended use or abuse.
-  The recommended way of disposing of medication is to take the medication to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Registered collection site. These are facilities that are approved to accept unused medications. Here's a great search link to help you identify a DEA registered collection site near you.
<https://apps.dea diversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1>
-  The DEA and many local agencies also host National Prescription Drug take back days. These are usually hosted in communities and happen as large national events. Often the "take back" locations are at your local police station or fire station. These events usually take place in April and October of each year. You can find out when the next National Prescription Drug take back event is by visiting :
https://www.dea diversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html
-  When there is not a DEA registered collection site or a take back option available, there are two other ways recommended to dispose of medication.
 1. The first recommended method concerns a few medications that have specific directions to immediately flush them down the toilet when they are no longer needed and when a take back option or a DEA registered collection site are not available. These are medications that the FDA has determined are especially detrimental if they are used outside of a prescription and under the guidance of a physician. If you live in a rural community without flushing toilets, this may not be a viable option. In this event, follow the method for disposal in the household trash. A list of medications recommended for immediate disposal in the toilet can be found here:
<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/UCM588196.pdf>

2. If the medication does not need to be or cannot be flushed down the toilet, the second method recommended for disposal is preparing the medication so it can be thrown away in your household garbage. To prepare for the garbage, you should mix the medication along with an unpalatable substance like used coffee grounds, dirt, mustard, or kitty litter in a plastic bag and then throw in the garbage. The FDA does not recommend crushing tablets or capsules, just mix the unused medication with the undesirable stuff and throw it away. The purpose is to make the medication less desirable and recognizable in the event that someone is looking for medication in the garbage.

📖 There are also a few companies who make drug disposal and deactivation kits for families to dispose of medications. Many of these kits render the medication inactive or inert, and make it safe to throw in the garbage without fear of the medication being taken out of the trash.

📖 Below are recommendations for safe disposal for medications not listed above or when a DEA registered collection site or Take Back event are not available.

1. *Inhaler products:* There is not a universal disposal method for inhalers. Follow the handling instructions that came with the inhaler. Many are able to be disposed of in the garbage.
2. *Needles/lancets:* The recommended disposal method of needles is to place them inside what is called a “sharps container” and return them to an approved drop off location. Most often these approved locations are at pharmacies, police/fire stations, and doctors’ offices. If you do not have access to a “sharps container” or an approved drop off location, *American Nurse Today* recommends placing used needles in a container that has thick walls that cannot be easily punctured (like a coffee tin or laundry soap bottle), securing the lid in place with tape, and then throwing it in the garbage.
3. *Adhesive medication patches:* Birth control patches can be treated the same as medications and mixed with an undesirable substance and thrown in the trash can. However, medications other pain medications, like fentanyl are recommended to be flushed down the toilet. If that is not possible, follow the procedure for throwing them in the garbage.
4. *Can medication be donated?* Alaska, unlike some other states, does NOT have any laws that allow for unused medication to be donated. Prescription medication can only be administered to the person the physician prescribed the medication to.

📖 One additional recommendation. The FDA offers that once medication is disposed of, that the label of the medication be removed and destroyed. If you cannot remove the label, black out any identifying information of the prescription contents and the name of the person the medication was prescribed to.

📖 A final note from the Alaska Center for Resource Families for Alaska resource parents: When you dispose of or destroy medication in any of the above mentioned manners, you should always document it. Note the medication, to whom it was prescribed, and if possible, have a second party as a witness to the destruction of the medication.

Check Out this Infographic For More Information:

<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/UCM599501.pdf>

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