



## How to Dispose Of Drugs Safely

The following guidelines are for households and individual consumers only.

### **Where available, take your medications to a local collection event.**

Contact your local pharmacy, recycling coordinator, or municipality to find out if there is a household hazardous waste collection\* near you. While waiting for a collection event, keep all medications in a safe, secure place in your home out of reach of children.

- **Important information regarding *controlled substances*:**

To guard against unauthorized use of controlled substance medications, the NYS Department of Health must approve events that collect these substances. Before you take controlled substances to a collection event you should check with the event organizers to see if they are authorized to accept them.

### **If there is no collection event in your area dispose of drugs in your household trash.**

#### **Before placing in the trash, follow these steps:**

- To avoid accidental or intentional misuse of drugs, treat medications (liquids and pills) by adding water and then salt, ashes, dirt, cat litter, coffee grounds, or another undesirable substance.
- Hide all medications in an outer container, such as sealable bag, box or plastic tub to prevent discovery and removal from the trash. Seal the container with strong tape.
- Dispose of drugs as close to your trash collection day as possible to avoid misuse and/or misdirection
- Do not conceal discarded drugs in food to prevent consumption by scavenging humans, pets or wildlife

**Note:** Be careful in handling medications since some drugs can cause harm if handled by people other than those to whom they were prescribed. Also, avoid crushing pills as some medications can be harmful in powder form.

### **Medications self-administered by injection with a needle or "sharp" may also be disposed of in the trash.**

If such medications include an attached needle, they should be placed in a puncture proof container, sealed with tape and labeled as "sharps." However, the state *strongly recommends* that medications with attached needles be disposed of at hospital-based household sharps collection programs. All hospitals in New York State (except for federal facilities) are required to collect sharps from households.

### **Medications without attached needles may be disposed of in household trash as described above.**