



Getting Unused Medications Out Of Your Home Safely

(NAPSA)—Here's a surprising statistic: More than 4 billion prescriptions are written every year in the U.S. and approximately 40 percent of these drugs aren't taken according to directions. Failing to finish a prescription medication is one of the most common issues, with Americans leaving 200 million pounds of medication unused annually. In some cases, patients may stop taking a drug once they feel better. Other situations leave caretakers with significant amounts of excess medications.

These unused medications can pose a number of problems. If left in the medicine cabinet, they can cause accidents with young children or may be abused by teens and adults. The problem is not as uncommon as some might think—nearly 7 million Americans over the age of 12 report having used prescription drugs in the past month for nonmedical reasons and the numbers are increasing.

The Lack of Good Disposal Options

In light of these figures, many people are seeing the importance of disposing of unused medication. Even when motivated to do so, however, people can be faced with limited options for getting rid of medications responsibly. In the past, some sources recommended flushing unused medicine down the toilet, but recent evidence shows trace amounts of pharmaceuticals in waterways and drinking water supplies. There have been over 1,000 published reports of pharmaceuticals in sewage, surface waters, groundwater and elsewhere, and an estimated 40 million people in the U.S. are



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exposed to it. Due to these findings, government authorities now say pharmaceuticals should not be disposed in the toilet or sink.

Throwing medication in the trash does not effectively neutralize the potentially harmful substances in the drugs. Mail-in disposal products are also available, but only for a limited range of substances, and they also require labels to be left on the medications, raising privacy concerns. Finally, some communities organize collection programs, but these can be inconvenient to access due to limited hours and the necessity for law enforcement to be present. Even when drugs are successfully collected through these programs, their eventual incineration can cause air pollution.

A New Method For Easy Disposal

Fortunately, a new product has recently been introduced to meet



It's a good idea to dispose of prescription medication so no one is tempted to try it who shouldn't.

the need: a pouch with a specially designed inner packet of a drug-deactivating ingredient. Users simply place their medications into the pouch, add a small amount of water, seal it and dispose of the pouch in the household trash. A proprietary activated carbon system in the pouch neutralizes the medication, chemically deactivating the drug. After disposal, the pouch continues to work by keeping the drugs chemically bound so they cannot leach into groundwater from the landfill.

The main ingredient in the pouch, activated carbon, is used extensively in municipal water purification and in emergency treatments of drug overdose. The pouch works with any prescription pharmaceutical product, including controlled drugs and narcotics. It's compatible with drugs in tablet, capsule, liquid or patch form.

The Medsaway Medication Disposal System is an affordable and convenient way to increase the safety of your home and dispose of medications responsibly. It's available in drugstores and online. Retail locations can be found at www.medsaway.com.