



Staying Smart About Prescription Medicines

(NAPSA)—For almost half of the American population, prescription medicines are a part of daily life. When taken as prescribed, they can play an important role in the treatment and prevention of a variety of health conditions. However, prescription medicines can be harmful in the hands of those who do not have a valid prescription.

“Many people don’t realize that the most common source of prescription medicine abuse is the medicine cabinet of a family member or friend, not ‘dealers’ or illicit drug sources,” says Jan Engle, a pharmacist and past president of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) and Executive Associate Dean and Head of the Department Pharmacy Practice at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy. “That’s why it’s important for everyone to know how to store and dispose of prescription medicines properly.”

Dr. Engle and APhA are working with the American Chronic Pain Association and Cephalon, Inc., to offer advice about prescription medicine storage and disposal as part of the When Good Medicines Become Bad DrugsSM program. To keep your family medicine cabinet safe, Dr. Engle recommends the following tips and information:

“Start with a biannual inventory of all over-the-counter and prescription medicines,” says Dr. Engle. “Any medication past its expiration date, showing signs of decay, or left over from a previous illness should be set aside for disposal.”

Prior to throwing away in the trash, medication should be removed from its original container

Tips for properly disposing of prescription medicines:

- Remove from original container.
- Mix with kitty litter or used coffee grounds in a sealable container and throw in the trash.
- Remove any identifiable information from original containers before throwing away.
- Do not flush unless specifically instructed to by label or accompanying patient information.
- Contact your pharmacy to check for drug take-back programs. 

and mixed with an undesirable substance such as kitty litter or coffee grounds in a disposable container with a lid or in a sealable bag. Or, check with your pharmacy for disposal days or other programs for unused medicines.

Dr. Engle also says medications should be stored in an area that is cool and dry, since heat and humidity can damage medicines. Locking medications in a cabinet or drawer can also keep prescriptions safe and prevent others from gaining access, either intentionally or accidentally.

“We all have responsibilities to ensure our prescription medicines are used safely and appropriately,” says Dr. Engle. “By keeping these helpful tips in mind, we can all do our part to help prevent misuse or abuse of prescription medicines.”

For more information and additional tips from other experts, visit www.GoodMedicinesBadDrugs.com, a Cephalon-sponsored website.