



What if a take back program isn't available?

Improperly disposed medicines are hazardous to children and pets. If your community does not have a medicine take back program, follow these steps⁶ to safely dispose of your medicine:

1. While not the preferred option, most medicine can be disposed with your household trash.
 - » Remove medicine from the original container and put it in a resealable bag or container.
 - » Do not crush pills.
 - » Mix with kitty litter, used coffee grounds, dish soap, or another unpalatable substance and tightly seal.
 - » Place in the trash on or as close to pick-up day as possible.
2. Some medicine, like transdermal patches, CIDRs, and other hormone-releasing medications, can contain leftover medicine after use. After treatment, fold these drug patches in half with the sticky sides together or place the device in a resealable bag and follow the manufacturer recommended directions for disposal.
3. Dispose of packaging in the trash after crossing out all personal information from the label to protect your identity and privacy.
4. Needles and syringes should not be discarded with medications. Contact your local health department, veterinarian, or pharmacist for information about sharps disposal.

Reduce waste to prevent pollution!

- Keep livestock medications organized in a central location on the farm to avoid purchasing more than can be used by the expiration date.
- Regularly inventory your medicines. If you currently have expired or unwanted medications on your farm, arrange for their safe disposal.
- Consider all your options before you put expired or unwanted medicine in the trash.

For more information about the problems caused by unwanted medicine in the environment, how to find or start a take-back program in your community, and the partnership between Sea Grant and the American Veterinary Medical Association, visit:

unwantedmeds.org



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^{1,2}For references, visit unwantedmeds.org/veterinary-medications/

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Prescription For Safety

How to Dispose of Unwanted Veterinary Medicine

and Protect Your Livestock



Proper storage and disposal of veterinary medicines can protect your family, pets, livestock, and the environment.

On farms of all sizes, veterinary medicines are utilized to ensure the health and well-being of livestock. Correct storage and handling of medicines can ensure effectiveness and reduce treatment errors.¹ Understanding the rules and regulations for animal medicines can create a safer farm for your employees, untreated livestock, family, and pets.

Improper disposal of medicines—those that are flushed down sinks or toilets, or thrown in landfills—can also cause environmental problems since they may end up in our rivers, lakes, coastal waters, and even in our drinking water^{2,3}. Fish and other aquatic animals that live in water contaminated with pharmaceuticals have shown impaired reproduction⁴ and development⁵.

What Can You Do?

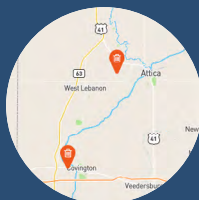
1. Use Medicine as Directed

Follow your veterinarian's instructions when administering medication to your livestock. Give every dose as instructed, even if the condition seems to be improving or is resolved. Your livestock will benefit by avoiding disease relapse and drug resistance, and you won't have to worry about disposing of any leftover doses.



✦ 2. Find a Drug Take Back Program

Although no return programs aimed specifically at veterinary pharmaceuticals currently exist, take back programs offer a single day event or permanent drop-off location for the safe, environmentally responsible disposal of unwanted or expired medicine. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration also sponsors the "DEA National Take Back" every spring and fall, in partnership with local law enforcement. To find a program near you, visit www.unwantedmeds.org or contact your local law enforcement office, municipality, or waste management service for more information.



3. Return to a Veterinary Clinic

Local veterinary clinics may accept unwanted and expired veterinary medicine for safe disposal, though they are not required to do so. Check with your local clinic for options. Likewise, drug companies may be willing to accept unused, expired medications. Controlled substances, which are drugs regulated by the federal government, should never be returned to a veterinary clinic.



4. Dispose of Medicine Properly

Never flush unwanted or expired medicine unless the medication gives specific instructions to flush it as a means of disposal. Unwanted or expired medicine should never be incinerated in burn barrels, composted, or buried.



5. Find a Municipal Drop Off Site

Municipal or local trash services may offer programs where veterinary medicine can be dropped off for disposal. Contact your local waste management service to inquire about options in your area. Some expired medication is considered hazardous waste, so your local hazardous waste disposal facility may also have recommendations for proper disposal.