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Dear provider of pharmaceutical services,

Awareness of proper and safe medication disposal practices and efforts to promote them is of great importance for health promotion and diseases prevention. Studies have suggested that many healthcare providers and patients are not aware of proper medication disposal practices. In order to help with this matter, we are attaching a summary of important facts regarding proper medication disposal practices that may serve as a guide to promote these practices in your community.

You can find more information and resources regarding medication disposal visiting the U.S. Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) and/or the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) websites.

On PharmPix we are compromised with the health and wellness of our insured. It is our priority to offer high quality services and to promote practices for health promotion and diseases prevention. If you have any doubt or wish to have more information regarding this document, you can call us to 787-522-5252, extension 138.

Regards,

Pharmacy Department

MEDICATION DISPOSAL

Appropriate disposal of expired, unwanted, or unused medications as quickly as possible reduces the chance that others accidentally take or intentionally misuse these medications. In addition, proper medication disposal practices help in avoiding the contamination of water with traces of pharmaceutical products that can exert a negative environmental and public health impact.

Options for disposal of expired, unwanted, or unused medications

- **Medicine take-back options:** These are the preferred way to safely dispose of most types medications. There are generally two kinds of take-back options:

1. Periodic events

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) periodically hosts National Prescription Drug Take-Back events*** where temporary collection sites are set up in communities for safe disposal of prescription drugs.

Visit the DEA's website for more information about National Prescription Drug Take-Back events and to locate DEA-registered collectors.

Local law enforcement agencies may also sponsor medicine take-back events in your community. Local waste management authorities can also offer information about events in their area.

2. Permanent collection sites

Another option to dispose of medications is to transfer these medicines to DEA-registered collectors***, which safely and securely collect and dispose of pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances and other medicines.

Retail pharmacies, hospital or clinic pharmacies, and law enforcement facilities may become authorized permanent collection sites. As authorized collection sites, mail-back programs or collection receptacles may also be offered to assist patients in safely disposing of their unused medicines.

- **Disposal in the household trash:** If no take-back programs or DEA-registered collectors are available, and there are no specific disposal instructions in the product package insert, instruct your patients to follow the steps in Figure 1.

- **Flushing certain potentially dangerous medicines in the toilet:** A small number of medicines have



Figure 1. Steps to dispose most medications in the household trash.

Image obtained from:
<https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm>

specific directions to immediately flush them down the toilet when they are no longer needed and a take-back option is not readily available. The FDA recommends the medications listed in Table 1 be promptly flushed down the toilet. For specific disposal instructions, refer to products package inserts.

Table 1. List of medications recommended for flushing disposal	
Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API)	Brand names in which this API is found
Benzhydrocodone/ Acetaminophen	Apadaz
Buprenorphine	Belbuca, Bunavail, Butrans, Suboxone, Subutex, Zubsolv
Fentanyl	Abstral, Actiq, Duragesic, Fentora, Onsolis
Diazepam	Diastat/Diastat AcuDial rectal gel
Hydrocodone	Anexsia, Hysingla ER, Lortab, Norco, Reprexain, Vicodin, Vicoprofen, Zohydro ER
Meperidine	Demerol
Methadone	Dolophine, Methadose
Methylphenidate	Daytrana transdermal patch system
Morphine	Arymo ER, Embeda, Kadian, Morphabond ER, MS Contin, Avinza
Oxycodone	Combunox, Oxaydo (formerly Oxecta), OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Roxicet, Roxicodone, Targiniq ER, Xartemis XR, Xtampza ER, Roxybond
Oxymorphone	Opana, Opana ER
Tapentadol	Nucynta, Nucynta ER

List obtained from:
https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm#Medicines_recommended (Revised: 04/2018)

IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT BOTH HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF PROPER AND SAFE MEDICATION DISPOSAL PRACTICES. THE PHARMACY TEAM CAN HELP IN THE INSTRUCTION ON PROPER MEDICATION DISPOSAL. PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE, LEARN MORE ABOUT PROPER AND SAFE MEDICATION DISPOSAL PRACTICES AND SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

References:

1. Kinrys, G., Gold, A., Worthington, J., & Nierenberg, A. (2018). Medication disposal practices: Increasing patient and clinician education on safe methods. *Journal of International Medical Research*, 46(3), 927-939. doi: 10.1177/0300060517738681
2. Disposal of Unused Medicines: What You Should Know. Retrieved from: <https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm>
3. Dispose Safely | National Association of Boards of Pharmacy. Retrieved from <https://nabp.pharmacy/initiatives/awarxe/dispose-safely/>

