Safe Use and Disposal
OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Safety Tips

• Take your medication only as directed.
• Carefully note the time a medication was administered and consider writing it down.
• Do not cut pills in half or crush them to make them easier to swallow – unless directed by your OMS. This can change the way the medication is released into your system and have serious consequences.
• Never share your medication with someone else, as this is illegal.
• Do not take more than prescribed – even if pain relief is less than desirable – as this could result in side effects (including unintended overdose), especially when you are new to a medication. If less-than-adequate pain relief is obtained with the prescribed medication, contact your prescribing doctor.
• Store medication in a safe place only you can access:
  ○ In a locked drawer
  ○ On a high shelf
  ○ In a lock box or home safe
• Keep all medicines out of reach of children and pets.
• Keep medications in their original packaging until you are ready to take them.
• If you experience any adverse effects, get emergency help. Examples include:
  ○ Slow heartbeat
  ○ Trouble breathing or slow, shallow breathing
  ○ Severe sleepiness
  ○ Cold, clammy skin
  ○ Faintness
  ○ Dizziness
  ○ Rashes

Parents and guardians should administer medication to minors to ensure safety and avoid misuse. Remember, medications are safe and effective when used as directed and under the care of a professional.

Proper Disposal Tips

Careful use and storage of your medications keeps everyone safe as does thoughtful and proper disposal of unused medicines.

MEDICINE TAKE-BACK PROGRAMS

Medicine “take-back” programs are a good way to dispose of expired, unwanted or unused medicines and reduce the chance someone else might take the medication:
• Visit AAOMS.org or the Drug Enforcement Administration’s website (TakeBackDay.DEA.gov/) for information about national Prescription Drug Take Back Day events.
• Contact your trash and recycling service to see if there is a medicine take-back program in your community. Learn about any special rules regarding which medicines can be taken back.
• Ask your pharmacist about medicine disposal programs in your area.

DISPOSAL IN HOUSEHOLD TRASH

• If no medicine take-back program is available in your area, follow these simple steps to dispose of most medicines in the household trash:
  ○ Mix medicines (do NOT crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance, such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds.
  ○ Place the mixture in a container, such as a sealed plastic bag.
  ○ Place the container in your household trash.
• Peel off or scratch out all information on the prescription label to make it unreadable before disposing of your empty pill bottle or other empty medicine packaging.

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