

# How to Dispose of Unwanted Medications

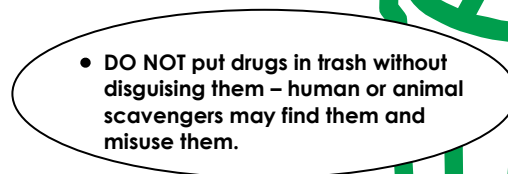
Expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications from households should never be disposed of by flushing them down the toilet or drain. Although this method of disposal prevents accidental ingestion, it can cause contamination to Hawaii's aquatic environment because wastewater treatment systems are not designated to remove many of these medications.

## Seven Steps to Safety

Please use these practical guidelines when disposing of prescription and over-the-counter medicines:

### For Pills and Liquids:

1. Keep the medicines in the original container. This will help identify the contents if they are accidentally ingested.
2. Mark out your name and prescription number for safety.
3. For pills: add some water or soda to start dissolving them. For liquids: add something inedible like cat litter, dirt or cayenne pepper.
4. Close the lid and secure with duct or packing tape.
5. Place the bottle(s) inside an opaque (non see-through) container like a coffee can or plastic laundry bottle.
6. Tape that container closed.
7. Hide the container in the trash. Do not put in the recycle bin.



## Don't Flush That Leftover Medicine

Adapted from:  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
850.245.8707 [www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us)