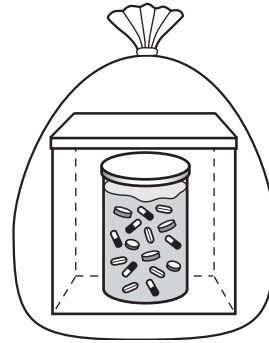


# Best Management Practices for **Pharmaceutical Disposal**



**1** Incineration Is Best For Disposing Of Unused Pharmaceuticals.



**2** Landfill Unused Pharmaceuticals When Incineration Is Not Feasible.



**3** Never Flush Pharmaceuticals Down The Toilet Or Drain



**4** Maintain Close Inventory Control



**5** Always Follow Federal And State Guidelines.



**6** Educate Your Clients On Proper Disposal



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*Important Phone Numbers*

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To download this poster, visit [www.avma.org/drugdisposal](http://www.avma.org/drugdisposal)

Be part of the  
**SOLUTION**  
**NOT THE PROBLEM**  
 Each year, pharmaceutical drugs are disposed of improperly  
 and contaminate our environment, especially the water.



The American Veterinary Medical Association, in conjunction with Abbott Animal Health, has developed a poster, based on the Best Management Practices for Pharmaceutical Disposal, to help educate your staff and clients on the importance of proper drug disposal.

Display the poster in your clinic or work space.  
 Let's all do our part to act responsibly and protect our environment.

Turn the page to find your poster, or download it now at  
[www.avma.org/drugdisposal](http://www.avma.org/drugdisposal)



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## Best Management Practices for Pharmaceutical Disposal

### Minimize unused pharmaceuticals:

- Maintain close inventory control to decrease expired/unused drugs.
  - Write prescriptions for infrequently used drugs to prevent expirations.
  - Consider assigning responsibility for inventory control and disposal to one or a limited number of staff members.
  - Whenever possible, return drugs nearing expiration to the distributor.

### Follow federal and state guidelines for disposal of controlled substances and hazardous waste.

### Incineration typically provides the highest level of best management:

- Contract with an appropriate commercial disposal company. Sharps and medical waste disposal companies may be able to provide this service, depending on state regulations. Local human hospitals may have information on incineration companies or services available in the area.
- Use containers provided or recommended by the disposal company. The container should be leak-proof. Use of a leak-proof and tamper-resistant package will help prevent diversion. Add an absorbent substance such as kitty litter for liquids.
- For partially used liquids in syringes, place the needle in a sharps container, evacuate unused liquid pharmaceuticals into a leak-proof container containing an absorbent material such as kitty litter, and dispose of the syringe as appropriate medical waste.

- For drugs in a labeled package, blacken all personal information, place a large X over the product label but maintain the product identification, and place in a tamper-resistant and leak-proof container per incineration company guidelines.
- Label the container "For Incineration Only" to help prevent diversion.
- Maintain the pharmaceutical disposal container in a location away from client access, and consider storing filled containers in a locked storage area.

### Consider landfilling if incineration is not feasible in the area:

- For partially used liquids in syringes
  - Squirt the remaining liquid into a container of kitty litter or other absorbent substance. Dispose of the syringe and needle as appropriate medical waste.
  - Seal it and dispose of it in a leak-proof bag.
- Blacken all personal information and place a large X over the product label but maintain product identification.
- Segregate from other types of waste and keep sealed in a leak-proof container.
- Use three layers of packaging to ensure the container does not leak.

### Other important tips:

- Controlled substances and hazardous wastes (including chemotherapeutic agents

and epinephrine) are handled differently from non-hazardous waste, and must be disposed of in accordance with federal and state laws. The services of a commercial company may be needed to comply with those laws.

- Never flush pharmaceuticals into the toilet or squirt down the sink.
- Never burn pharmaceutical waste unless authorized by federal and state regulations in an approved incinerator.
- Train all clinic employees on proper disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste.

### Client education strategies:

- Educate clients on proper disposal – inform clients that flushing unused pharmaceuticals is never appropriate.
- Be aware of return-for-disposal (take-back) programs in your area and encourage clients to participate.
- Dispense only the necessary quantity for appropriate treatment. Use refills rather than dispensing large quantities of a medication.

**Be certain to check state and county laws and regulations for specific disposal requirements.**

**For questions or additional information please visit [www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org).**