



Destruction of Patient Medications in the Home

Policy:

Community Hospice & Palliative Care offers to help patients and caregivers dispose of medications supplied by Community Hospice & Palliative Care and no longer utilized by a patient in the homecare setting, in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

Controlled substances in the patient's home are handled according to requirements of the Controlled Substances Act of 1970.

If the patient is in a long-term care or assisted living facility, the medications are destroyed according to facility policy.

Controlled medications in the home must be disposed of appropriately when they are no longer needed by the patient or at the time of death.

Procedures:

1. Medications are disposed of using an Easy Drug Disposal kit (a tall white plastic canister, called the EDD kit). When medication is placed in the EDD kit and water is added, the medications begin to dissolve. The following may be placed in the EDD kit:

- Tablets, capsules, etc.
- Liquids (2 ounces or less)
- Patches—remove from package and place in canister
- Suppositories without the wrapping
- Controlled creams—squeeze into canister

Items are covered with water or liquid medication and the canister is shaken.

Exceptions: Large-volume IV solutions and large-volume liquid medications (non-controlled) may be disposed of by pouring down the drain. Creams and ointments (non-controlled) may be disposed of in the waste bag.

2. When the EDD kit is full, it is discarded in the trash—not in the recycle bin.

3. Disposing of medications by the nurse requires the presence of a witness, which may be the patient, caregiver or family member.

4. Controlled medications require a witnessed count and disposal. Non-controlled medications require a witnessed disposal.

5. The name and prescription number on prescription labels are marked out for privacy/safety.

6. Wrappings are disposed of in the trash.

7. Medications are not disposed of by flushing them down the toilet or drain. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection discourages flushing of medication because this may cause contamination to



Florida's aquatic environment. **Note:** The only exceptions are some large-volume intravenous fluids like saline solution and large-volume liquid medication (greater than 2 ounces).

8. Medications from the home are not returned to the pharmacy or removed by anyone in the organization for destruction outside the home.

9. If the caregiver refuses a visit by the nurse at the time of death, the caregiver is instructed by the nurse on how to destroy remaining medications in the home. The reason for refusal is documented.

10. If during the visit the destruction is refused by the caregiver, the nurse informs the caregiver that federal law prohibits the transfer of any drug to any person other than the patient for whom it was prescribed. Refusal by the caregiver to dispose of controlled drugs is documented. A reason for refusal is required and documented.

Reference: CMS, Conditions of Participation for Hospice Care (CoPs), August 4, 2014, 42CFR 418.106 (e)(2)(B and C).