



BVC BLAST

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Medication Disposal Resources

Improper disposal of medications was identified as a contributing factor in recent attempted suicides, misappropriation, and neglect MUIs. These cases showed that excess medication that was not properly disposed of contributed to individuals having/taking large amounts of medications to self-harm, medication being stolen, and medication being incorrectly administered. Remember the importance of proper medication disposal to protect those you serve, your staff and others. The following information is provided from DODD's Category 1 Certification Training Curriculum, January 2020 edition. Below you will find how to properly dispose of medication, prevent theft and safe medication practices.

Disposal of Medications

- Medications that are being disposed of need to be documented. Document the medication name, strength, amount of medication and method used for disposal. Have a witness document that the medication was disposed.
- Remember: When a person dies; do not dispose of their prescription medication(s) until a law enforcement officer, the coroner, or the investigative agent from the ICF or County Board of DD indicates that it is okay to do so. Prior to disposing of any medication, it must be counted to ensure the correct count at the time of death. Schedule II, III, IV drugs must be counted by two different people at the same time.
- Before destroying any medication, document the amount of medication(s) to be destroyed (name, strength, and amount).
- Medications that are expired, contaminated, declined, or discontinued must be disposed of safely. Medications may be returned to the person's pharmacy for disposal if that is an option.

- **Disposal options in Hancock County: Permanent Medication Collection Boxes at the City of Findlay Municipal Building and the Hancock County Sheriff's office.**
- US FDA (US Food & Drug Administration) guidelines for the disposal of medications include:
 - Mixing medication with something that will hide it or make it unappealing, such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds, then placing the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag and throwing the container into the household trash.
 - To protect the person's identity and protect their privacy, be sure to remove and destroy the label from the original container before throwing the container in the trash.
 - Additional information can be found at: <https://www.fda.gov/media/74164/download>
 - Medications should not be flushed

Preventing or Reducing Occurrences of Medication Theft

- Medications must be secure. Whether medications are locked or not will depend on the person and the situation. Medication should be secured as directed in the person's plan or as directed by the delegating nurse, or agency policy. In some instances, medications may need to be kept in locked storage, in other situations medications may be safely kept in a dedicated place that is secure.

Note: the need to have medications locked for security does not prevent self-administration.

Misappropriation (theft) is a Major Unusual Incident (MUI).

Adverse consequences of stolen medications:

- Not receiving medications as prescribed
- Prolonged illness or delay in progress
- Unnecessary pain/discomfort
- Drug withdrawal or disease relapse
- Financial hardship

Stealing, borrowing, or other misappropriation of medications can result in serious outcomes for personnel such as:

- Criminal charges
- Revocation of certification
- Termination of employment
- Listing on the DODD Abuser Registry

Helpful hints to assist with proactively preventing medication thefts:

- Document security procedures and practices
- Track who administers medications
- Establish an effective accounting system for all medications
- Provide for a safe/secure storage area with limited access
- Report and address medication errors immediately
- Store only those medications necessary to have on-hand (avoid overstocking)
- Train all personnel on the importance of proper medication administration and storage
- Conduct an inventory of medications routinely so that problems can be quickly identified and investigated
- Monitor the administration of medication routinely
- It is important to have a tracking system to look for problems over time. Resolve any identified problems as soon as possible

Safe Practices:

- Secure medications
- Provide adequate oversight of all medication administration
- Place each person's medications in a separate bin or storage unit
- Account for medications regularly to assure medication administration procedures are being followed
- Keep on hand only the amount of medications needed: do NOT overstock for the sake of convenience
- Be alert for signs of drug abuse and report suspicions to the appropriate personnel immediately
- Stay alert to signs that a person may not be getting their medications and report this immediately
- Even people who live alone need to keep medications secure from children and any other visitors