

HOW TO MINIMIZE DRUG WASTE AT YOUR FACILITY

Sample drug waste:

1. Have all drug reps sign in and list what they leave behind so you can maintain an accurate inventory of drugs on hand.
2. Only accept drugs you know you will use.
3. Do not accept short dated drugs (less than 1 year).
4. Make sure products are rotated on the shelves.
5. Some clinics are going to a voucher system and eliminating samples all together.

Hospital drug waste:

The information in this section is partially taken from Practice Greenhealth's Managing Pharmaceutical Waste – A 10 Step Blueprint for Healthcare Facilities in the United States available at: <http://cms.h2e-online.org/ee/hazmat/hazmatconcern/pharma/>

1. CONSIDER LIFECYCLE IMPACTS IN THE PURCHASING PROCESS
 - a. Do not accept drugs with less than one year dating unless that is all that is available and you know the drugs will be used.
 - b. Select products with less packaging, especially P-listed drugs. If packaging from a P listed drug comes in contact with the drug, it must be handled as hazardous waste.
 - c. Select products without preservatives, especially Thimerosal or phenylmercuric acetate which must be handled as hazardous waste.
 - d. Consider single dose containers which do not need preservatives.
2. MAXIMIZE THE USE OF OPENED CHEMOTHERAPY VIALS
3. LABEL DRUGS FOR HOME USE

Medications must be returned to the pharmacy for destruction when the patient is discharged unless there is a discharge prescription from the doctor and proper labeling for the container(s). Because this causes delays in the discharge process, the prescriptions are often abandoned by the patient.

 - a. Consider including pre-authorized discharge orders for maintenance medications.
 - b. Produce labels in the units to avoid waiting for prescriptions from the pharmacy.
4. PRIME AND FLUSH IV LINES
 - a. Pharmacies should prime all chemotherapy IVs with saline prior to dispensing.
 - b. Nurses should flush the tubing after administration. This ensures the patient gets the full dose and reduces opportunity for employee exposure.
 - c. Flushed IV lines can be managed as trace chemotherapy waste.
5. EXAMINE THE SIZE OF CONTAINERS RELATIVE TO USE
 - a. Conduct a survey of drugs routinely wasted due to the prepared product being too large for complete administration.
 - b. Purchase different dosage formulations of these drugs to allow for varied dosage to patients.
 - c. Tell your General Purchasing Organization if the correct product size is not available.

MANAGING SAMPLE MEDICATION

Expired sample medications managed properly will help keep down the pharmaceutical waste management costs for your facility. Drugs returned to a distributor do not count toward your generator status and are not subject to stringent hazardous waste regulations.

1. Expired sample medicines are required to be taken back by the distributor according to a Florida Drugs, Devices and Cosmetics Program regulation. The regulation reads in part: "Disposal. All complimentary or sample packages of prescription drugs which are expired shall be returned to the manufacturer or distributor." [61N-1.008(2) Florida Administrative Code]. Read the Rule here: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=61N-1> by clicking on 62N-1.008. You can call the Drugs Devices and Cosmetics program for more information on how these samples should be handled at 850-717-1816 or mail to:
Compliance and Enforcement Office
Drugs, Devices and Cosmetics Program
Department of Business and Professional Regulation
1940 North Monroe St, Suite 26A
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1047
2. If your facility is associated with a hospital, talk to them about including your unwanted medicine with their pharmaceuticals that are handled by a Reverse Distributor. Reverse Distributors are not generally a cost effective way for clinics to manage drugs on their own.
3. In the future, consider setting up a more stringent office policy for sample medications management, ensuring that there are fewer that expire in your office:
 - Have drug representatives sign in and list what they leave behind so you can maintain an accurate inventory of drugs on hand.
 - Only accept drugs you know you will use.
 - Do not accept short-dated drugs (less than 1 year).
 - Make sure products are rotated on the shelves.
 - Some clinics are going to a voucher system and eliminating sample all together.