

AFAP issue: Dunham Clinic clarifies medication disposal guidelines

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One of the topics raised at last week's Army Family Action Plan conference here was how Carlisle Barracks residents could dispose of their unused or expired medication, and if it would be possible for the Dunham Army Health Clinic to set up a program to accept the medication.

"The Dunham US Army Health Clinic Pharmacy accepts all non-controlled medications for disposal," said Lt. Col. Charles Unruh, deputy commander, Dunham Clinic. "Non-controlled medications can be brought to the pharmacy during normal business hours for disposal.

Dunham Clinic, like all pharmacies, is prohibited from accepting controlled substances by the *Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act (CSA), of 1970*.

However, the Carlisle Barracks Army Substance Abuse Program, in partnership with the Cumberland/Perry County Drug & Alcohol Commission's Prevention Coalition Committee, sponsors the Medication Take Back Program, twice a year in the spring and fall. This event allows for the take back of controlled and non-controlled substances. The most recent event was held September 17, 2011 in Mechanicsburg. The next Coalition sponsored event is spring 2012.

While the Carlisle Barracks Community encourages people to dispose of their medication through community take back programs there are other ways they can be disposed of properly.

Disposal techniques vary by medication and people should follow any specific disposal instructions on the drug label or patient information that accompanies the medication. Specific disposal information can be found at <http://www.smarxtdisposal.net/>

To dispose of medication in the garbage:

- 1) Pour medication into a sealable plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), add water to dissolve it.
- 2) Add kitty litter, sawdust, coffee grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for pets and children to eat) to the plastic bag.
- 3) Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash.
- 4) Remove and destroy ALL identifying personal information (prescription label) from all medication containers before recycling them or throwing them away

The FDA recommends flushing of certain medication to include several types of controlled medications. Flushing these medicines will get rid of them right away and help keep families and pets safe. A listing of medications recommended for flushing is found at <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm#MI>