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## **DESTRUCTION OF MEDICATIONS**

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- The Hospice nurse will destroy the unused medications in the home by mixing them in an undesirable substance, like used coffee grounds or kitty litter. This is placed in a puncture-proof, nondescript container, such as a detergent bottle. Discard such containers in the trash, not by recycling. Some medications may also be flushed down the sewer system,\* witnessed by a family member.

\* Disposal via sewer system can be done only if accompanying patient information specifically instructs it is safe to do so.

- If the nurse is not present, the designated family member will dispose of the medications as outlined above, according to the hospice nurse's instruction.
- A witness should observe the count and actual disposal/flushing of the medications during this procedure.
- Avoid flushing large quantities of medications. Flushing of smaller amounts is a safer form of disposal. Careful observation is required to ensure that the medications are completely flushed.
- The Hospice nurse will document all medication destruction.
- Medications should be handled while wearing gloves to protect the skin from caustic substances or possible absorption.
- The empty containers should be rinsed out, gathered in a bag and placed directly into the household garbage for final disposal.
- State and federal law prohibit the use of any medication by anyone other than the person for whom the medication was prescribed.