

Destruction and disposal of Schedule 8 substances

Schedule 8 (S8) medicines (Controlled Drugs) are substances and preparations for therapeutic use which have high potential for abuse, addiction and diversion. In the Northern Territory (NT) the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2012* (MPTGA) and regulations govern destruction and disposal of S8 substances. In addition, relevant Australian Standards and environmental protection legislation apply.

Who can destroy S8 substances?

Consumers should return unwanted medications to a community pharmacy for disposal via the Return of Unwanted Medicines (RUM Project).

Possession of a S8 substance without an authority or legal prescription is an offence under MPTGA. Health practitioners and authorised persons have possession rights under MPTGA and may destroy a S8 substance when witnessed by:

- an authorised officer (medicines and poisons officer)
- a police officer of, or above the rank of sergeant
- a health practitioner
- a veterinarian

Regulations 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 62, 63, 64 and 65 contain the rules for maintaining a S8 register. The person destroying a S8 substance must record and sign the dealing in a S8 register, including the name and signature of the witness.

Alternatively, a health practitioner or authorised person may choose to return the substance to their supplying pharmacy or wholesaler. The same record keeping requirements apply.

How to dispose of S8 substances

Pharmaceutical waste needs to be disposed of in a way that recognises the risks of unintentional effects on the environment as well as the potential for diversion. S8 medicines have a high risk of diversion and therefore, destruction needs to render drugs unrecognisable and unusable at the point of disposal.

Disposal of Waste

Appropriate disposal is through high temperature incineration and pharmacies should have policies and practices to support this.

Do not dispose through general waste or waste water systems.

Australian standards require appropriate containers to be used to store pharmaceutical waste and the disposal process. Containers for pharmaceutical waste should be dedicated for this purpose and be stored appropriately to reduce access by non-authorised people. In Australia the RUM program provides pharmacies with waste bins and a disposal service. Appropriately destroyed S8 medicines can be placed in RUM bins for disposal.

For commercial or large quantities consider the use of a licenced waste disposal company.

Disposal kits

Purpose manufactured Controlled Drug disposal kits suspend the S8 medicine in a rigid gel making the product harder to retrieve and may be an alternative to physically destroying the S8 medicine prior to disposal. It is preferred that kits contain a chemical neutralising agent.

Security

S8 substances waiting for destruction must be kept in a S8 safe in accordance to the 'Code of Practice for Schedule 8 substances – Volume 2, Storage and Transportation'.

All items disposed of into any waste bin must have all patient information removed prior to disposal. This includes non-S8 medicines.

Suggested/accepted methods of destruction include:

Dose Form	Method	Notes
Tablets/ Capsules	Tablets should be crushed or pulverised until they form a powder that is unrecognizable from their original form. Capsules should be separated from their contents. Tamper resistant products such as OxyContin®, Jornista® and Concerta® tablets are crush resistant. These products can be cut by garden shears, or pulverised in a blender before discarding. They may also be discarded directly into a disposal kit.	If using a blender, allow dust to settle before discarding
Sachets	Empty contents in to pharmaceutical waste bin. Wrapper can be discarded into pharmaceutical or normal waste bin.	
Patches	Cut into roughly 1cm ³ strips and place in pharmaceutical waste bin. Patches may be placed on newspaper before cutting and discarding into pharmaceutical waste bin	Use gloves. Patches are designed for absorption via skin.
Glass Ampoules	If large number (>20 ampoules) place ampoules on several sheets of newspaper, cover with a similar number of sheets and crush the ampoules with a heavy object such as a brick or hammer. Discard crushed ampoules with paper into pharmaceutical waste bin If only a few ampoules, break the top off and empty contents directly into the pharmaceutical waste bin. Discard empty glass as above or in a sharps bin.	Use ampoule opener as appropriate

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Plastic Ampoules	Empty contents directly into the pharmaceutical waste bin. Empty ampoules can be discarded into regular waste bins.	
Liquids	<p>Small volumes of liquid may be discarded directly into the pharmaceutical waste bin. Empty bottle can be discarded in to regular waste bins.</p> <p>Larger volumes should be absorbed onto kitty litter or other absorbent material before discarding into the pharmaceutical waste bin. The amount of any absorbent used should be kept to the minimum needed to absorb the liquid.</p> <p>The bin should not contain greater than 1Litre of free liquid.</p>	Other tablets in the RUM bin may absorb some of the free liquid.
Lozenges	<p>In a container, cover lozenges with a small amount of hot water, dissolve by stirring and discard resulting solution in the pharmaceutical waste bin.</p> <p>Lozenges may also be crushed or pulverised.</p>	Do not place lozenge stick in blender.
Sublingual wafers / films	In a container, dissolve wafers in a small amount of hot water. Discard resulting solution in the pharmaceutical waste bin.	
Long Acting Depot / pre filled Injection	<p>Eject liquid contents of syringe into a container with a similar amount of water. Discard resulting mass directly into pharmaceutical waste bin.</p> <p>If a disposal kit available, eject syringe contents into liquid filled disposal kit and allow substance to solidify before appropriate disposal in pharmaceutical waste bin.</p>	The S8 pre filled injections currently on the market Buvidal® and Sublocade® expected to form a gel depot/solid mass once they come in to contact with liquid, similar to their response to contact with body fluids.
Other Dose forms	Obtain advice from product information and or manufacturer	