

Meeting 8: Continue working on “Drug Disposal & Chemicals”

1. Thank everyone for participating.
2. Ask your leaders to report the progress with your Action Steps for “Energy Efficiency”, “Solid Waste and Recycling”, and “Education”.
3. At this meeting, continue working on your TWO Action Steps from “Workbook 5: Drug Disposal & Chemicals”: <http://www.mygreendoctor.org/workbook-5-drug-disposal-chemicals/>(provided below).
4. Announce the date for the next meeting, on the topic, “Healthy Foods in the Office.”
5. After the meeting, fill out the Green Team Notes form. Keep it very brief– not more than 5 minutes for the Notes: <https://www.mygreendoctor.org/resources/green-team-notes-form/>



Discarding Pharmaceuticals

Adopt policy for safe medication disposal by the office, your families and patients. Prepare a one-page handout for your office and patients. Every time your office recommends a new medication to patients, remind them of safely discarding their old pharmaceuticals. Print our free posters & buy simple picture frames to inform your colleagues and patients:

Almost all medicines, vitamins and herbal medicines can be thrown



Green Cleaning Supplies

into your household trash. These include prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs in pills, liquids, drops, patches, creams, and inhalers.

If you are concerned that the medicines could be misused by others, remove the drugs from their original containers and mix them with something undesirable, such as used coffee grounds, dirt, or cat litter. Put the mixture in something you can close — such as a plastic bag, empty can, or other container to prevent the drugs from leaking or spilling out. Throw the container in the garbage. Scratch out personal information on the empty medicine packaging to protect privacy.

Some medicines, such as adhesive medicine patches, liquid medicines, and inhalers, come with instructions for their disposal. Some inhalers can be dangerous if the container is punctured. You can ask your pharmacist or return these to the pharmacist, but never discard medicines in the sink or toilet as these can contaminate public water supplies. Unused medicines also can be returned to most pharmacies for disposal. Speak with your pharmacist. If you are not sure what is advised in your community, contact the government to learn the disposal rules for medications and especially for controlled substances. You may find this information on line from your government, your trash collector, or your hazardous waste collection center.



Green Cleaning Supplies

Adopt an office policy to use only “green chemicals” endorsed by Green Seal , EcoLogo, Environmental Choice , or a similar organization. These are products that are safer for you, safer for the workers who made them, and safer for the environment. Products to identify in your office include general cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners, carpet cleaners, glass cleaners, floor strippers and waxes. Never use bleach, a common cause of lung injury to health professionals. The person who sells and delivers your cleaning products may know about safe chemicals and be pleased to help. Consider sharing with your colleagues and patients our “Green Cleaning” blog: <https://www.mygreendoctor.org/green-cleaning-keeps-toxins-out-heres-how/> . Tell your patients that you choose safer, “greener” chemicals!



Green Hand Soaps

Adopt a policy to use only Green hand cleansers in the public areas such as restrooms. Avoid “anti-bacterial” products as these generally are not necessary, are expensive, and can harm the environment. Never use soaps containing triclosan, a chemical that is particularly hazardous. Consider sharing with your colleagues and patients our “Cheaper & Greener” blog: <https://www.mygreendoctor.org/safe-soap-cheaper-greener-by-avoiding-triclosan-2/> . Display signs stating that you use only environmentally-certified cleaning products for the safety of your patients and of the environment. Prepare an informational handout on green cleaning for patients and staff.



Say “NO” to Mercury

Adopt a policy to eliminate all mercury from your office. Mercury is a metal used in liquid form in many medical devices, such as sphygmomanometers, thermometers, and thermostats. Mercury evaporates at room temperature to become a highly toxic gas that causes nerve damage, kidney disease and harm to unborn children. Take an inventory of your mercury containing devices. Plan a timetable to rid the office and your homes of mercury-containing devices. Fluorescent lightbulbs contains mercury: always discard these safely. See our “Workbook 1: Energy Efficiency” for more information on bulbs.

