

March: Spring Cleaning

Spring cleaning: Don't forget the medicine cabinet!

Why proper disposal?

Some medicine is harmful if used by those for whom it's not intended, including children and animals. And disposing of old medications reduces the risk of unintentional use, overdose, and illegal abuse. Plus, a wide range of prescription drugs have been found in lakes, streams, rivers, and drinking water supplies due to flushing them down the toilet.

How do I throw away medicine?

Follow the disposal instructions on the patient information that comes with your medicine. If you don't have this, throw the medicine in the trash. But be sure to follow these tips:

- Take the medicine out of its original container. To protect your privacy, scratch off any personal information on the label.
- Mix the medicine with something that masks the medicine or makes it unappealing, like kitty litter or used coffee grounds.
- Put the mixture in a container or a plastic bag and place it in your trash.

What about flushing?

Only about 12 drugs should be flushed down the sink or toilet. For a list of these drugs, visit the FDA website and use the search terms "disposal by flushing."

Talk to your pharmacist if you have questions about how to dispose of your medicine. Your pharmacist may also be able to tell you about any drug "take-back" programs in your area. You can also check with your state health department for additional information.

Medicine cabinet must-haves

Everybody takes a little spill here or there or gets a cough or diarrhea and then stumbles around the bathroom trying to find bandages or cough medicine or other medication. That's why you should have these medicine cabinet essentials always on hand.

- Hydrogen peroxide for wounds
- Antibiotic ointment
- Adhesive bandages and sterile gauze pads
- An oral thermometer
- Pain reliever, such as acetaminophen, for headaches and/or other aches and pains
- Sunscreen
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Cough medicine
- Cold/flu medicine



Expert Tips for Spring-Cleaning Your Bathroom

Although spring-cleaning may have become a thing of the past, germs haven't. They continue to grow and linger in one of their favorite places—the bathroom.

"People these days just don't take time out from their busy schedule to clean," says Donna Duberg, an assistant professor of clinical laboratory science at Saint Louis University. Even if you're not planning to strip down bedding and curtains to get rid of the dust and dirt that accumulated over the winter months, Duberg offered some streamlined ways to create a germ-free bathroom.

- **Don't overdo it.** Avoid using too many cleaners and dilute the products you do spray in the bathroom. The fumes in cleaning products can affect the lungs. It's also important to open windows or turn on a fan while cleaning to avoid breathing in fumes.
- **Don't let things go.** If basic cleaning, such as removing visible dirt, occurs regularly, spring-cleaning to remove scum, mold and lime scale, which can breed bacteria, isn't as big a challenge.
- **Read directions.** Read cleaning product labels carefully and be sure to follow the manufacturers' directions on how they should be used.
- **Take extra precautions.** When someone is sick, surface areas should be cleaned more frequently. Paper towels should be used to dry hands rather than a cloth towel to prevent the spread of germs. Toothbrushes should also be dried and put away.
- **Use bleach properly.** Bleach is effective against germs, but it isn't safe for children or pets. When using a 10 percent bleach solution, wash the surfaces with hot, soapy water afterwards. Bleach solution must also be made fresh and used within 24 hours.
- **Try vinegar.** Vinegar can be an effective, inexpensive and safe surface cleaner. Mix one part white distilled vinegar with nine parts water to create a safe and inexpensive cleaning product. Undiluted white distilled vinegar mixed with baking soda can also be used to remove scum.

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Be smart about potential health hazards in your home

Preventing Household Poisonings

More than 90 percent of poisonings occur in homes, and more than 53 percent involve children younger than age 6.

The following steps can help you prevent a poisoning in your home:

- Never leave children alone in a room with cleaning, cosmetic or medical products. A child can quickly and easily pull allergy pills from a purse or drain cleaner from a grocery bag.
- Store alcohol and tobacco products out of reach. Both can cause long-term physical damage or death if swallowed by a child.
- Keep medications, vitamins, and herbal remedies put away. Swallowing vitamin pills that contain iron can be fatal to a child. Many medications are mild to highly toxic and some, such as heart medication (digitalis), anticoagulants (warfarin), chemotherapeutic agents, and others, can be fatal when ingested by children.
- Be sure you give a child the proper dose of the proper medication. Overdosing can cause serious reactions.
- Remove poisonous plants. Caladium, castor bean plant (one bean can kill a child), elephant's ear, philodendron, mistletoe, holly, and dieffenbachia can cause skin irritation, vomiting, diarrhea, confusion, and other side effects if eaten by children.
- If you have gas-powered appliances, check them regularly for carbon monoxide leaks and make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors in your home.

Check for hazards

Check these locations in your home for hazardous products. Store the following poisonous products securely:

Garage. Antifreeze, windshield cleaner, gasoline, charcoal lighter, pesticides, fertilizers, garden chemicals, fungicides, and flea and pest powder.

Bedrooms. Cosmetics, cologne, hair spray, nail polish and remover, mothballs, medications, and vitamins.

Bathroom or laundry room. Pine oil, drain and toilet cleaners, bleach, disinfectants, detergents, and aerosol sprays.

Kitchen. Insect killer, metal polish, alcohol, dishwashing detergent, and oven cleaner.

Home workshop. Solder, lead, cadmium, formaldehyde, solvents, paint, and paint thinner.

Cover your bases

Don't rely on just one poison control measure. For safety's sake:

- Store harmful products out of sight and reach.
- Keep products in their original containers. For example: Never store bleach or toxic liquids in milk bottles.
- Use products only for their intended purposes

Source: Copyright © 2014 Krames StayWell



Peanut Butter Hummus

Calories 235 Total fat 9 g Saturated fat 1 g Cholesterol 0 mg Sodium 225 mg Total fiber 5 g Protein 9 g Carbohydrates 32 g Potassium 259 mg Vitamin A 0% Vitamin C 8% Calcium 4% Iron 10% Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Ingredients

For dip:

- 2 C low-sodium garbanzo beans (chick peas), rinsed
- ¼ C low-sodium chicken broth
- ¼ C lemon juice
- 2–3 Tbsp garlic, diced (about 4–6 garlic cloves, depending on taste)
- ¼ C creamy peanut butter (or substitute other nut or seed butter)
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper (or substitute paprika for less spice)
- 1 Tbsp olive oil

For pita chips:

- 4 (6½-inch) whole-wheat pitas, each cut into 10 triangles
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp garlic, minced (about 1 clove) (or ½ tsp garlic powder)
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 °F.

1. To prepare the hummus, combine all ingredients for the dip and mix them in a food processor or blender. Puree until smooth.
2. Prepare the chips, toss the pita triangles with the olive oil, garlic, and pepper.
3. Bake chips on a baking sheet in a 400 °F oven for 10 minutes, or until crispy.
4. Arrange pita chips on a platter, and serve with the hummus.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
<http://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov/recipe/detail.aspx?cid=0&rid=158>