

<b>SECTION 8A: CLINICAL PRACTICES</b>	<b>POLICY: 8A.0</b>
<b>POLICY: STORAGE &amp; DISPOSAL OF MEDICATIONS, SUPPLIES &amp; WASTE</b>	<b>PAGE: 1 OF: 2</b>

**POLICY:**

- Helms Home Care will educate patients & caregivers on the proper storage and disposal of infusion medications and related supplies in accordance with this policy and specific pharmacy recommendations/instructions.
- During the initial admission visit, and as needed thereafter, a skilled nurse will ensure that the patient/caregiver verbalizes and/or demonstrates understanding of proper storage and disposal of infusion medications and related supplies including any hazardous waste identified as blood, bodily fluids, needles and/or sharps.

**STORAGE:**

- When in doubt, look for storage instructions on the medication label.
- Most medications sent to the home will need to be stored in a refrigerator and taken out to warm to room temperature prior to administration.
  - Store medications in the body of the refrigerator. Do not store in the door.
  - Always maintain separation between medications and food items.
  - Keep medications in the plastic bag to help keep them clean.
  - Avoid freezing medication.
  - Full-size refrigerators are best. If you must use a small/mini refrigerator, store medication as far away from the freezer compartment as possible.
- Flushes, supplies and some medications may be stored at room temperature.
  - Store medications and supplies in a cool, dry area. Do not store them in the bathroom or in areas with high humidity.
  - Store medications and supplies out of reach of children and pets.
  - Keep supplies organized to know when to re-order.
- For certain medications, it is important that they not be exposed to light for extended periods of time. Keep these medications in the amber bag in which they were delivered until you are ready to use them.

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**DISPOSAL:**

- For used IV medication and supplies, you can place into regular garbage. This includes:
  - IV tubing,
  - Syringes with NO needles,
  - Empty bags/syringes, or unused supplies.
- For un-used IV medications, patient can be instructed to follow the following steps:
  - Check to see if there is a drug take-back location near you, as they may accept unused medications. Contact your local program to confirm they accept IV medications.
  - DEA Take-Back Program Finder:  
<https://apps2.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1>
  - If no take-back programs are available, unused medications may be thrown in the trash and/or discarded as follows:
    - Mix medicines with an unpalatable substance (dirt, kitty litter, used coffee grounds).
    - Place mix in a container such as a sealed plastic bag.
    - Throw the container away in your household trash.
- Some therapies include the use of a Sharps / Medical & Hazardous Waste container. This container is provided by the pharmacy that provides the medication and should be used to discard and dispose of:
  - Any items that have been in contact with hazardous waste including gloves, gowns, caps, masks, tubing, etc.
  - Used IV catheters
  - Used needles
  - Used cannulas
- Once the container is three-quarters full or no longer needed, close the lid. Make sure the lid is locked in place and secure. Place the container in a plastic bag with a twist tie and dispose in the garbage. Let your pharmacy know when you need a replacement.