

Deterra Drug Deactivation System Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)



How is Deterra different from its competitors?

Deterra® PERMANENTLY DEACTIVATES the drug rendering it unavailable for abuse or diversion, where as other at-home disposal products may sequester the drug which temporarily restricts access - leaving the drug in an abusable form.

How does Deterra work?

Each patented Deterra pouch contains a water-soluble inner pod containing proprietary MAT₁₂® Molecular Adsorption Technology which deactivates medication using activated carbon. Once the pharmaceuticals are placed in the pouch, warm water is then added, which dissolves the inner pod releasing the activated carbon. The warm water also dissolves the drugs contained in the pills, patches, liquids, creams and films, allowing them to be adsorbed by the carbon, rendering them inert and non-retrievable for all practical purposes.

What drugs will Deterra deactivate?

Deterra will deactivate any organic medications including opioids. However, it will not adsorb any metals, such as iron or lithium, contained in certain medications. If a select medication has specific disposal instructions, please follow those instructions.

Why shouldn't I just flush or "sink" unused meds?

Water treatment facilities struggle to filter out all pharmaceutical drugs from the water. As of 2014, there were over 1,500 published reports of the occurrence of pharmaceuticals in sewage, surface waters, ground waters, and elsewhere. Because of these findings, most federal, state and local authorities are now recommending (and many requiring) that pharmaceuticals NOT be disposed in the toilet or sink.

What about mixing medications with cat litter, coffee grounds or sawdust?

How does that compare?

Cat litter, coffee grounds, and sawdust make the drug undesirable but do not deactivate the drugs. Once in the landfill, these drugs can still leach out into the ground and into the water. Third party testing proves that the MAT₁₂® carbon in Deterra deactivates the drugs rendering them inert and more environmentally sound.

How quickly does the deactivation process work?

With Deterra, the process of deactivation starts immediately, but it takes time to complete. Some highly soluble drugs will dissolve and react rapidly, while other less soluble drug types will take longer to dissolve and react. The deactivation period varies based on volume and type of medication. It is important to keep Deterra out of the reach of children and pets as the product is deactivated.

Are different sizes of Deterra available?

Yes, Deterra is available in multiple sizes. Please consult DeterraSystem.com or call a Deterra Representative at 612.568.1128 to determine which size will best meet your needs.

What is the capacity of Deterra for pharmaceuticals? What if I accidentally added more drugs than the amount recommended?

The recommended capacity is listed on each Deterra pouch. Adding drugs to Deterra in amounts at (or less than) our recommended capacity will result in optimal deactivation efficiency. If one were to add more than the recommended pharmaceutical capacity, deactivation of additional drugs will still occur but at reduced efficiency.

What would happen if I didn't add water?

The water-soluble pod located inside the pouch will not open and expose the carbon to the medication. Warm water will also help to dissolve pills and draw the drugs out of patches. The absence of water will not allow the deactivation process to begin. Please follow the directions on the back of the pouch.

Are the Deterra active ingredients safe?

The granular activated carbon used in Deterra is non-corrosive to the skin or the eyes. The carbon is considered non-flammable and is stable under normal conditions in shipment, storage and use. There are no known harmful effects associated with ingestion of the carbon. It is considered non-toxic.

Does carbon release the drug if exposed to heat or solvent?

Based on testing, back extraction of the deactivated drugs is not effective. When used properly, the activated carbon will retain the drugs, rendering the contents of the Deterra pouch inert and non-retrievable for all practical purposes.

Aren't we just adding another plastic bag to landfills? Isn't the incineration of unused pharmaceuticals the best for the environment?

The Deterra Drug Deactivation Pouch is made from environmentally sound materials. This allows for the degradation of the plastic pouch through the use of an organic additive that reacts with the microbes found in the landfill. The result is the release of water and carbon dioxide, with little organic biomass left behind. This greatly reduces the amount of material left in landfills.

Have Government Agencies endorsed Deterra?

Government agencies do not endorse specific products. However, according to The President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, "...The Commission encourages more hospitals/clinics and retail pharmacies to become year-round authorized collectors and explore the use of drug deactivation bags....In addition, the Federal Government supported the development of drug deactivation bags to allow safe disposal of old prescription opioids."

Where can I purchase Deterra?

To purchase direct or for a full list of our distributors, call 612.568.1128 or email us at Sales@DeterraSystem.com. For individual pouch purchase, visit DeterraSystem.com.

How can I comply with local environmental regulations?

At-home drug disposal is generally unregulated by federal, state and local authorities. Customers using Deterra institutionally should follow all federal, state and local regulations. We have found state and local authorities to be very helpful, and they can conveniently be contacted for questions.

I work in a Healthcare Facility with a DEA registration. We encounter the need to dispose of controlled substances. Can I use Deterra for this purpose in compliance with my registration?

According to the DEA, any destruction method applied to a controlled substance must render it "non-retrievable" and subsequently unavailable, unusable, and no longer available for diversion for all practical purposes. Testing results have shown Deterra to meet these standards. Ultimately, it is up to the individual waste generator to ensure that they comply with all local, state and federal regulations.