

Are Sip Feeds as waste medicines?

Following queries about the return of sip feeds to community pharmacy as waste medicines NHSE&I have shared the following information

- SPS Principles on the Disposal of Waste Pharmaceuticals used within Community Health Services: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Disposal20of20Waste20Pharmaceuticals20used20within20CHS.pdf> (see page 6)

Dietary Supplements

Where liquid dietary supplements occur in small quantities (less than 1 litre) and present no other hazard, these can be discharged to the foul sewer.

This has been agreed across the UK and Northern Ireland in the National Guidance for Healthcare Waste Water Discharges April 2011.

Containers must be opened individually and emptied. The containers themselves must be placed in landfill waste. Under Landfill regulations, liquid waste cannot be sent for disposal to a landfill site.

If larger quantities need to be disposed of, the manufacturer or supplier may be able to arrange for uplift. In the case of individual patients, the “Homecare” provider will usually be able to arrange uplift. **Bulk quantities should not be discharged into the foul sewer without prior discussion with your local sewerage undertaker.**

Where disposal of powder dietary supplements (e.g. in a sachet or in a tin) is required these must be placed into a Pharmaceutical Non-Hazardous Waste container.
(this guidance was updated 2015)

- Department of Health Environment and sustainability Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe management of healthcare waste: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167976/HTM_07-01_Final.pdf (see page 145)

Non-pharmaceutically-active medicines are the exception. Liquids (including sugar and salt solutions), sterile water, and nutritional supplements can be disposed of to foul sewer; if there is any doubt, advice from the sewerage undertaker should be sought. The containers can be rinsed and recycled.

(this guidance was updated in 2013)

Yorkshire Water have stated that for instances of volumes up to 30 litres then dispose of these via sinks. It may be beneficial to wash through with some running water to protect the drains in the property and prevent blockages. Please ensure all disposal is to foul or combined sewer. They should not be disposed of to a surface water drain. Use of sinks should ensure that this is the case.

For quantities over 30 litres where the patient is no longer in need of the supplement, it would be advised that these are returned to the supplier or the pharmacy (from where they were supplied) so that all returned products can be disposed of in accordance with waste regulations.

Please note that the advice in terms of quantity is for the Yorkshire Water waste water area only.