

How to safely throw out unused prescription medications

Keeping old medications around your home can be unsafe as they can be taken accidentally or misused. That's why you should get rid of unused or expired medicine as soon as possible.



Here are 4 tips for disposing of unused medicines

1

Ask your local pharmacy

Contact your local pharmacy to see if they have a medication take-back program. You may be able to drop them off in person or send them in a special package provided by the pharmacy.

2

Use a community drug take-back program

If you have unused controlled substances, such as opioids, a community take-back site is the preferred way to dispose of them. Some sites will also accept them by mail in special packaging.

Drug take back sites near you:



For other take back locations near you, visit apps2.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e2s1

3

If a drug take-back or collection program is not available, you can throw away your medicines at home by following these steps:

- **Mix the unused supply with an unappealing substance** such as dirt, coffee grounds or kitty litter
- **Put the mixture into a disposable container with a lid**, such as an empty margarine tub, or into a sealable bag, then place the sealed container in your trash
- **Make sure to hide or remove any personal information**, including prescription number, on the empty drug containers by covering it with black permanent marker or duct tape, or by scratching it off to protect your privacy
- **Place the containers in the trash**
- **Only flush approved unused or expired medications down the toilet** if indicated on the label, patient information or when no other disposal options are available

4

Find additional information and resources on safe drug disposal from these and government websites

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

www.hhs.gov/opioids/prevention/safely-dispose-drugs/index.html

OR

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

www.DEATakeBack.com



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