



An outreach service for Medicaid providers to help identify and prevent potential gaps in evidence-based care, as well as detect fraud, abuse, overuse or inappropriate use.

PICK UP QUICK TIPS ON... promoting safe medication disposal

Educate patients on proper/safe medication disposal to reduce accidental or intentional misuse of unused, unwanted, or expired meds and help protect the environment.

QUICKtip SC

Safe disposal is for ALL meds and supplements, not just opioids and other controlled substances

QUICK FACTS TO CONSIDER

- **Prior patient instruction was the factor most strongly associated with proper medication disposal.**
- Over **half** of Americans who admit to misusing pain meds say they got them from family or friends, including the medicine cabinet.
- It is estimated up to **40%** of prescribed meds go unused.
- Every **8 minutes**, a child is taken to the Emergency Department for a medication poisoning.
- Poison Control Centers average **32 calls a day** about children exposed to opioids (2000 – 2015).

GUIDELINES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR SAFE DISPOSAL OF ALL MEDS AND SUPPLEMENTS (Look Inside for More Details)

| TAKE BACK OR MAIL BACK Preferred method of disposal | DISPOSAL IN HOUSEHOLD TRASH When take back unavailable | FLUSHING DOWN TOILET FDA Flushable List, primarily opioids |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Receptacles are becoming available year-round at more and more pharmacies and law enforcement agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most sites accept controlled and non-controlled substances • Check for dosage form restrictions (e.g., liquids, inhalers/aerosols [combustible]) • None accept needles/sharps <p>DEA National Take Back Day occurs every April and October.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually the last Saturday in April and October • Locations can differ from year-round sites <p>Some pharmacies may offer Mail Back Programs as an alternative (may cost extra).</p> | <p>The next alternative is to discard in household trash (NOT recycling) if take back or mail back is not an option.</p> <p>Option 1: Homemade trash disposal method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIX the medicine (do not crush) with unpalatable substance (e.g., used coffee grounds, cat litter) in a resealable container or plastic bag, then SEAL & DISCARD. Discard the EMPTY prescription package separately after blacking out all words or removing label <p>Option 2: Commercially available trash disposal products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many commercial products either inactivate or encapsulate the med • Sometimes offered by pharmacy at no cost | <p>The FDA recommends immediate flushing for select controlled meds when no longer needed rather than trash disposal if a take back option is not readily available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agency believes the risk of overdose from accidental or intentional exposure far exceeds the risk to humans or the environment from flushing <p>SC DHEC advises against flushing any medications due to additional environmental exposure to animals and humans.</p> |
| <p>DEA ✓ DHEC ✓ EPA ✓ FDA ✓ PSI ✓</p> | <p>DEA ✓ DHEC ✓ EPA ✓ FDA ✓ PSI ¹ ✓</p> | <p>DEA ² ✓ DHEC ✗ EPA ² ✓ FDA ✓ PSI ✗</p> |

¹ PSI considers trash disposal a last resort. ² The DEA and EPA advise against flushing unless the FDA or accompanying patient information recommends otherwise.

KEY: **DEA** US Drug Enforcement Administration; **DHEC** SC Department of Health and Environmental Control; **EPA** US Environmental Protection Agency; **FDA** US Food and Drug Administration; **PSI** Product Stewardship Institute;
✓ recommended; ✗ not recommended.




MEDICATION DISPOSAL OPTIONS

TAKE BACK LOCATIONS FOR YEAR ROUND DISPOSAL

Not all drop-off locators available online list the same information. You may need to check more than one web address below to find the most convenient location. Check at the site for receptacle restrictions (e.g., liquids, inhalers or aerosols [combustible]).

No location accepts needles/sharps, thermometers, hydrogen peroxide, or illegal drugs.


Over 90% of South Carolinians have a year-round Take Back site within a 20 mile radius of their zip code

| Web Address for Selected Locator * | Locator Identifies... |
|---|--|
|  https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1 | Chain and independent pharmacies and clinics |
|  https://www.cvs.com/content/safer-communities-locate | CVS locations and law enforcement sites |
|  https://disposemymeds.org/ | Selected independent pharmacies |

* You can also type *medication disposal near me* in Google Maps to find the closest chain pharmacies

TAKE BACK LOCATIONS FOR DEA NATIONAL TAKE BACK DAY

Every April and October, usually the **last Saturday in the month**, the DEA sponsors safe, anonymous collection sites. Law enforcement is always present at these drop off locations.

| | |
|--|---|
|  https://takebackday.dea.gov/ | Location finder available about one month prior to take back date |
|--|---|

MAIL BACK OPTIONS

Instructions for use are included, such as **Do's** (e.g., original container, ≤ 4 ounces liquid [packaging put in a sealed bag]) and **Don'ts** (e.g., no needles/sharps, no illegal drugs).

PROPER DISPOSAL IN TRASH WITHOUT COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE DEVICES

Put solid or liquid meds into a resealable, plastic bag or container. Do NOT crush tablets or capsules.

Mix used coffee grounds, cat litter, dirt, or other nasty substance into bag/container to discourage accidental ingestion or intentional misuse; then seal it.

Put the well-sealed bag or container with med mixture in the household trash (NOT recycling).

Black out all prescription label information with a permanent marker or scratch off/remove (to protect everyone); then throw the empty bottle/packaging away (recycle if possible).

DISPOSAL IN TRASH WITH COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE DEVICES

Environmentally safer options for trash disposal have been developed for purchase. Some pharmacies offer a particular product at no charge, usually for controlled substance prescriptions; some offer upon request.

| Selected Disposal Devices | Web Address |
|---|---|
| Deterra [®] Drug Deactivation System | https://deterrasystem.com/ |
| DisposeRx [®] | https://disposerx.com/ |
| Pill Catcher [™] | http://www.thepillcatcher.com/safe-pill-disposal.html |
| Pill Terminator [®] | https://www.pillterminator.com/pages/about-us |
| Rx Destroyer [™] | https://www.rxdestroyer.com/ |

Check availability online and at pharmacies, including mail order



FDA RECOMMENDATIONS – WHEN TO FLUSH SELECT CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

The FDA recommends flushing selected controlled substances down the toilet IF disposal at a Take Back location is unavailable or inconvenient due to the risk of overdose from accidental ingestion or misuse. The FDA believes that this risk far exceeds the risk to our water supply and environment. The FDA is aware that low levels of meds are in our waters, and it is thought that most of that is the result of natural elimination via urine and feces.

| FDA FLUSHABLE MEDICATION LIST |
|-------------------------------|
| Opioids |
| Diazepam rectal gel |
| Methylphenidate patches |
| Sodium Oxybate |

- The complete FDA Flushable Medication List is available at: https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm#Medicines_recommended
- Each brand name on the list links to the manufacturer's package insert with specific disposal instructions
- SC DHEC advises against flushing any meds to protect our water supply and environment

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The information contained in this summary is intended to assist primary care providers in the management of adults in a primary care setting. This advice is advisory only and not intended to replace sound clinical judgment nor should it be regarded as a substitute for individualized diagnosis, treatment or management. In addition to general information about medication disposal available from state and federal agencies, check the drug label information or accompanying patient information for specific handling and disposal information. Commercial websites and products should not be considered an exclusive endorsement.

THROW THAT MEDICINE AWAY! BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY





**HELP LOWER RISK OF HARM TO HUMANS,
PETS, AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

MEDICINE TAKE BACK PROGRAMS

BEST Way to Get Rid of All Unwanted Medicines

You may need to check more than one source below to find the **Take Back Program nearest you**. It might be at a pharmacy, police station, or sheriff's office. Check at the drop off spot to find out what can be put in the Bin. For example, many do not accept inhalers.



| Find a Take Back Program | When Available |
|---|---|
|  apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1 | <p>All Year Round</p> <p><i>You likely have a drop off spot closer than you think</i></p> |
|  cvs.com/content/safer-communities-locate | |
|  disposemy meds.org | |
| <p>Type drug drop off near me or medication disposal near me in Google Maps</p> | |
|  takebackday.dea.gov (Location addresses available first of April and October) | <p>Last Saturday in April & October</p> |

DISPOSAL IN HOUSEHOLD TRASH

If Take Back Program is Not an Option



You can dispose of medicines in the trash (NOT RECYCLING). Follow the steps below:

1. Put the medicine in a resealable plastic bag or container. Do NOT crush tablets or capsules!
2. Mix used coffee grounds, cat litter, dirt, or other yucky substance into the bag/container to keep away people and pets. Be sure to seal it.
3. Put the well-sealed bag/container in the household trash, NOT recycling.
4. Scratch out or use permanent marker to black out everything on the package label or remove label. Throw away the empty package (recycle if possible).

Special Products for safer disposal of medicines in the trash can be found online and at some pharmacies (may be free).

FLUSHING MEDICINE DOWN THE TOILET

For Some Medicines Like Opioids if Take Back Program is Not an Option



The FDA says to flush some strong controlled medicines right away IF you cannot quickly get to a Take Back Program. The FDA believes the risk of overdose and death to people and pets is more than the risk to the environment. SC DHEC says to use trash disposal (see above) if no Take Back Program.

FDA US Food and Drug Administration
 SC DHEC SC Department of Health and Environmental Control



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