



## Disposing of Medications

### After a Death

*Keeping unused and or expired medications poses an unnecessary risk to those still living, especially children and pets. Removing unneeded medications from the home can prevent accidental exposure or intentional misuse. Properly disposing of medications after a death helps to keep children, loved ones, and pets safe.*

**Knox County Regional  
Forensic Center**

865-215-8000

2761 Sullins Street  
Knoxville, TN 37919

#### How/where to properly dispose of medications:

- Contact your local pharmacy to see if they accept medications for disposal (and if so, which kinds)
- Contact your local law enforcement agency to find out if they have a medication drop box
- Keep an eye out for local medication take-back programs
- Visit the following website for more information:  
<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/where-and-how-dispose-unused-medicines>

#### Remember:

- Do not put medications in the recycling bin.
- Do not give medications to anyone else, even if they have the same diagnosis/prescription. Medications are prescribed for the patient only and may be dangerous to someone else.
- Do not put medications in the trash without dissolving them.
- Do not flush medications down the toilet.



## Dispose of unused opioid medicines.

You can help keep your family and community safe. Get rid of any unused or expired prescription opioid pills, patches, or syrups to help save lives.

### What you should know:

- ✓ Don't share your opioid prescription with others.
- ✓ Store opioids out of sight and out of reach.
- ✓ Dispose of unused opioids safely when there is no longer a medical need for them.



**PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS** are powerful, pain-reducing medicines that include oxycodone, hydrocodone, and morphine.



**TAKE-BACK LOCATIONS** may include your local pharmacy or police station.



Remove  
the  
**RISK**



Learn more about safe drug disposal. Visit [www.FDA.gov/DrugDisposal](http://www.FDA.gov/DrugDisposal)

# Parents and Caregivers of Teens: *It's Important to Safely Dispose of Opioids*



Help keep your family and community safe, starting in your home—get rid of any unused or expired prescription opioids that may be hiding in cabinets, drawers, or anywhere else you store medicine. Remove these medicines as soon as possible to reduce the chance that your teen takes the opioids by accident or on purpose.

## WHAT IS AN OPIOID?

Prescription opioids are powerful pain-reducing medicines that include oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, and others. Doctors prescribe opioids after surgeries and for injuries; however, these medicines can have serious risks if they are accidentally or intentionally misused.

## WHY IS OPIOID DISPOSAL IMPORTANT FOR ME AND MY FAMILY?

Teens may take opioids that are not prescribed for them. Intentional misuse of prescription pain relievers by teens is an important public health issue, contributing to alarming rates of overdose and death.<sup>1</sup> Many people who misused prescription pain-reducing medicines said that they got their most recent pain reliever from a friend or relative.<sup>1</sup> Prevent potential misuse by restricting your teen's access to opioids.

## HOW DO I SAFELY DISPOSE OF OPIOIDS?

Ask these questions to determine how to dispose of opioids:

1. Is a [medicine take-back option](#) readily available? If so, this is the preferred option.
2. If not, is the medicine on the FDA "[flush list](#)"? If it is, flush it down the toilet.
3. Otherwise, throw it away in the household trash, following the directions at [www.FDA.gov/DrugDisposal](http://www.FDA.gov/DrugDisposal).

For information about all three of these methods, visit [www.FDA.gov/DrugDisposal](http://www.FDA.gov/DrugDisposal).



**Keeping unused opioids in the home creates a serious health risk, especially if teens live with or visit you.**

### Remember:

- ✓ Don't share your opioid prescription with others.
- ✓ Store opioids out of sight and out of reach of teens in your home.
- ✓ Dispose of unused opioids safely when there is no longer a medical need for them.

<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data>

I need to get rid of this medication.

# Drug Disposal Options

## Do you have medicine you want to get rid of?

Do you have a drug take-back option readily available?

Check the [DEA website](#), as well as your local drugstore and police station for possible options.

**NO**

**YES**

Is it on the [FDA flush list](#)?

**NO**

Follow the FDA [instructions for disposing of medicine in the household trash](#).

**YES**

[Immediately flush your medicine in the toilet.](#) Scratch out all personal info on the bottle and recycle/throw it away.

Take your medicine to a drug take-back location.

Do this promptly for [FDA flush list](#) drugs!