



SAFE MEDICATION STORAGE & DISPOSAL

WHAT WE KNOW

Prescription drug misuse is a major public health problem in the United States and is at an epidemic level in South Carolina. Five million pain killer prescriptions are filled every year in South Carolina – that is more than one for every person in our state, and 1 in 4 people who are prescribed opioids struggle with addiction. To prevent misuse of prescription medications, safely store and dispose of unused, unwanted, or expired medications to limit the possibility of illegal use.



SAFE MEDICATION STORAGE

First, get organized. Check to see if any prescription medicines are expired. Taking expired medication may no longer be safe or effective. Make sure prescription medicines are stored in the original packaging with the safety lock tightened and secured.

Second, secure your medicine. Keep your medicine in a place out of the reach of children and pets. Also, further secure any prescription narcotics like morphine, opioids, or codeine in a locked cabinet or drawer. Safe storage of these controlled medications is especially important, as they can be dangerous if taken when not prescribed.

SAFE MEDICATION DISPOSAL

First, any unused or expired prescription medicine should be disposed of as soon as possible. Timely disposal of prescription medicine can reduce the risk of others taking the medication accidentally or misusing the medication intentionally.

Second, use a permanent drug drop box or participate in a community “Take Back Drug Day” to dispose of unused or expired prescription medicine.



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If you cannot get to a permanent drug drop box or event and there are no specific disposal instructions in the medication guide, you can follow these simple steps to dispose of most medicines in your trash at home.



- **Mix** medicines (liquid or pills; do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unappealing substance such as dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds.
- **Place** the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag.
- **Throw away** the container in your trash at home; and
- **Delete** all personal information on the prescription label of the empty bottle.
- **DO NOT FLUSH** medicines down the sink or toilet unless the prescription drug labeling information that accompanied the medicine gave specific instructions on how to do so.

WHAT TO DO?



- Store medications out of sight and out of reach of children, teens, and pets.
- Don't share your prescription medications with others, including family members.
- Dispose of unused and expired opioids and prescription medications safely.



Use the following link to find DEA Controlled Substance Public Disposal Locations:
<https://apps2.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch>

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SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services
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Hold Out the Lifeline: A Mission to Families

Each One Can Reach One

803.461.3201 hotlifeline.org



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