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Things You Need to Know About Safe Disposal of Prescription Opioids and Other Medications



- 1 Dispose of unused opioid medications as soon as possible.** Safe disposal is an important part of addressing the opioid abuse epidemic.
- 2 Do not share your medication,** even if you know someone who is experiencing symptoms similar to yours or has been prescribed the same product in the past.
- 3** Before disposing of medications, **scratch out personal information** on the label to protect your privacy.
- 4** Look at the label or package insert for **specific disposal instructions** or information.
- 5** **Take advantage of programs that take unused medicines** for proper disposal. Visit www.AgainstOpioidAbuse.org/disposal to find the nearest disposal location
- 6** **Ask your pharmacist if they offer disposal options.** Many community pharmacies have designated drop off areas for unused medication.
- 7** Many opioids are on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s **[list of medicines recommended for disposal by flushing](#)**, meaning you can flush the unused prescription down the toilet. Existing data suggest these medicines pose low environmental risk if flushed.
- 8** You also can ask your healthcare professional's office or pharmacist if they provide **medication disposal bags** (these bags neutralize medicines to avoid damage to the environment).
- 9** Alternately, you can **combine your medication with dirt, kitty litter or used coffee grounds** and discard in the trash.
- 10** **Give your medicines a check-up.** Go through all of your medicines every six months and dispose of those that are past their expiration date or are left over from a previous illness or condition.

It's important to follow the steps above and dispose of prescription opioids properly. For more information about safe disposal of opioids, talk to your healthcare professional and visit the [Food and Drug Administration](#).

 If you or someone close to you has an addiction to pain medication, talk to your healthcare professional or contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's treatment help line at **(800) 662-HELP**.

Allied Against Opioid Abuse is a national education and awareness initiative to help prevent abuse and misuse of prescription opioids. Founded by the Healthcare Distribution Alliance, the initiative is a collaborative effort with diverse partners across pharmaceutical supply chain, as well as organizations that are experts in public health and healthcare. Our goal is to contribute to solving the opioid crisis in a meaningful way by educating patients about their rights, risks and responsibilities. To learn more visit www.AgainstOpioidAbuse.org or follow us on Twitter @AAOA_Tweets.

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NCPIE encourages healthcare professionals and community groups to foster patient-professional communication about medicines. However, NCPIE does not supervise or endorse the activities of any group or professional. Discussion and action concerning medicines are solely the responsibility of the patient and their healthcare professionals, and not NCPIE. Please consult a licensed healthcare professional with questions or concerns about your medication and/or condition.

