

### Safe Medication Disposal in the Community

The 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health estimated that 18 million Americans misused controlled prescription medications at least once in the past year, and more than half indicated that they obtained the medications from a friend or family member.<sup>1</sup> A 2018 cohort study demonstrated an association between the potential access of prescription medications in the household and an increased risk of opioid initiation among other household members.<sup>2</sup> Safe medication storage and prompt disposal of expired, unwanted or unused medications can help reduce the chance of inadvertent exposure or intentional diversion of medications.<sup>2,3</sup>

Drug take-back programs such as the National Take Back Day hosted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) provide the general public with over 5,000 collection sites across the country, at which unneeded medications can be safely and properly disposed. The event takes place twice a year in April and October. *The 17<sup>th</sup> National Take Back Day will be held on April 27, 2019 from 10 AM to 2 PM.* Collection site information will be available at [https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/index.html](https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html).<sup>3,4</sup>

DEA-authorized collectors are also available year-round. These include retail pharmacies, hospital or clinic pharmacies, and law enforcement facilities.<sup>3</sup> Select locations have on-site collection receptacles installed. Prescription (schedule II-V controlled and non-controlled substances) and over-the-counter medications can be dropped off at no charge regardless of where they were purchased. Illicit drugs, needles and syringes, aerosols, inhalers, lotions or liquids are not accepted.<sup>5</sup> Exact locations of participating sites can be found at <https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch>.<sup>6</sup>

If there are no medication take-back events or disposal units available in the area and no specific instructions are in the product package insert, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provides the following guidance<sup>3</sup>:

- Remove medication and any personal information from the original container
- Mix medication with an unpalatable substance such as used coffee grounds or cat litter
- Place the mixture in a sealable bag that can be disposed in household trash

For medications that may be especially harmful (i.e. opioids), some retailers offer DisposeRx packets. These contain biodegradable powder that is designed to dissolve and solidify opioids into gel form when mixed with water and can be safely discarded at home.<sup>5</sup> Otherwise, FDA recommends immediately flushing them down the toilet.<sup>3</sup>

FDA Flush List <sup>3</sup>	
Active ingredient	Brand names
Benzhydrocodone/acetaminophen	Apadaz
Buprenorphine	Belbuca, Bunavail, Butrans, Suboxone, Subutex, Zubsolv
Fentanyl	Abstral, Actiq, Duragesic, Fentora, Onsolis
Diazepam	Diastat/Diastat AcuDial rectal gel
Hydrocodone	Anexsia, Hysingla ER, Lortab, Norco, Reprexain, Vicodin, Vicoprofen, Zohydro ER
Hydromorphone	Dilaudid, Exalgo
Meperidine	Demerol
Methadone	Dolophine, Methadose
Methylphenidate	Daytrana transdermal patch system
Morphine	Arymo ER, Embeda, Kadian, Morphabond ER, MS Contin, Avinza
Oxycodone	Combunox, Oxaydo (formerly Oxecta), OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Roxicet, Roxicodone, Roxybond, Targiniq ER, Xartemis XR, Xtampza ER
Oxymorphone	Opana, Opana ER
Tapentadol	Nucynta, Nucynta ER
Sodium Oxybate	Xyrem oral solution

#### References

1. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (2018). 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD.
2. Seamans, MJ, et al. Association of Household Opioid Availability and Prescription Opioid Initiation Among Household Members. JAMA Intern Med. 2018;178(1):102-109. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2017.7280.
3. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Disposal of Unused Medicines: What You Should Know. Updated February 27, 2019. Retrieved from [https://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforconsumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucm186187.htm#take\\_back](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforconsumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucm186187.htm#take_back). Accessed February 27, 2019.
4. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Take Back Day. Retrieved from <https://takebackday.dea.gov/>. Accessed February 19, 2019.
5. LaVito A (2018, April 15). Drugstores are making it easier to empty your medicine cabinet. CNBC. Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/15/cvs-and-walgreens-add-units-to-get-rid-of-painkillers-other-medicines.html?qsearchterm=drugstore%20pharmacy%20get%20rid%20of%20medications>. Accessed February 19, 2019.
6. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Controlled Substance Public Disposal Locations – Search Utility. Retrieved from <https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s6>. Accessed February 19, 2019.

The CalOptima Approved Drug List is available on our website: [www.caloptima.org](http://www.caloptima.org)  
and for PDA download at [www.epocrates.com](http://www.epocrates.com)