

Disposal of Unused Medicines: What You Should Know

Learn how to properly dispose of old, unused, unwanted, or expired medicine

en Español (/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/eliminacion-de-medicamentos-no-utilizados-todo-lo-que-debe-saber)

Disposal of Unused Medicines (January 2015)



Video: How to Dispose of Medicine

Drug disposal options to consider and instructions for getting rid of old, expired, unwanted, or unused medicines

Get Transcript (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/information-healthcare-professionals-drugs/transcript-disposal-unused-medicines>)

How to Safely Dispose of Unused or Expired Medicine

- The best way to dispose of **most types*** of old, unused, unwanted, or expired medicines (both prescription and over the counter) is to drop off the medicine at a drug take back site, location, or program (/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-drug-take-back-locations) **immediately**.

- If you cannot get to a drug take back location promptly, or there is none near you, **and** your medicine is
 - on the FDA flush list (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-flush-potentially-dangerous-medicine#FlushList>), your next best option is to immediately flush these potentially dangerous medicine down the toilet (</drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-flush-potentially-dangerous-medicine>).
 - **not** on the flush list (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-flush-potentially-dangerous-medicine#FlushList>), you should follow these instructions to discard the medicine in your trash at home (</drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-dispose-non-flush-list-medicine-trash>).

*Check out the Medication Disposal Q&A (</drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-questions-and-answers>) for more information including how to dispose of needles and syringes.

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!

www.fda.gov

Drug Disposal Options Infographic (/media/111887/download) (PDF; 2.1MB)

Remove *the* RISK

(/drugs/ensuring-safe-use-medicine/safe-opioid-disposal-remove-risk-outreach-toolkit)

Use our Safe Opioid Disposal - Remove the Risk Outreach Toolkit (/drugs/ensuring-safe-use-medicine/safe-opioid-disposal-remove-risk-outreach-toolkit), which contains public service announcements (PSAs), social media posts and images, fact sheets, and more, for talking with others about safe opioid disposal