

NEW SAFE DISPOSAL OPTIONS!

Drug take-back bins let you safely dispose of unwanted, unneeded, or expired medications



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Learn why disposing of unused medications is important — and easy



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Find out what can be dropped off in a bin — and what can't



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Learn what can happen if medications are disposed of in the trash or flushed down a drain





SNAPSHOT OF CALIFORNIA OPIOID USE

Opioid prescriptions in California are decreasing, thanks to a concentrated effort to fight this crisis. But a lot of work still needs to be done.

Drug-related overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S. More than three out of five drug overdose deaths involve an opioid.

But the numbers don't stop there. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **for every person who dies of an opioid overdose...**

12 people are admitted to a treatment program

25 are seen for complications in an emergency department

105 report opioid addiction or dependence

659 report using opioids for non-medical or non-prescribed purposes

In 2018, health officials tallied these opioid-related statics:

California

2,428 deaths

8,832 emergency department visits

19.8 million prescriptions

Imperial County

16 deaths

72 emergency department visits

86,695 prescriptions

Riverside County

144 deaths

560 emergency department visits

1,394,793 prescriptions

San Bernardino County

106 deaths

466 emergency department visits

1,309,011 prescriptions

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Learn how and why disposing of unused medications is important—and easy

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

We have all had the experience: Maybe your spouse didn't need the painkillers prescribed for recovery from surgery; maybe your teenager didn't use all of his acne medication because of side effects; maybe your elderly grandparent passed away, leaving a shoe box filled with prescription drugs.

If unused medications are thrown away in a garbage can, it is still possible that they may be illegally diverted. If drugs are flushed down a toilet or washed down the sink, they may end up in our landfills and waterways, harming wildlife and entering our drinking water.

Fortunately, there is an easy answer: Medication Take-Back

California Product Stewardship Council and its authors, State Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson and Assemblymembers Phil Ting and Adam Gray. In fact, statistics from up and down the state show that medication bins can result in a significant reduction in opioid deaths when bins are put in place.

"The take-back programs address a very important public health and safety issue," says Bob Davila, a spokesperson for the California State Board of Pharmacy. "Providing a safe way to dispose of (unused medications) keeps them from being abused or sold on the street, but also addresses a very important environmental issue. We just want people to be aware they are available in our community."

Hosting a bin through this program is easy and free—installation, disposal, and promotion are included. Bins can be placed in pharmacies, hospitals with pharmacies, and law enforcement agencies. People disposing of medications in these bins can also remain anonymous—no need to talk to anyone or answer any questions.

And best of all, the drugs are ultimately incinerated at a waste-to-energy facility and converted to energy. It's a complete win!

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Bob Davila, spokesperson
California State Board of Pharmacy

Where do you get rid of them safely?

And "safely" is the operative word here, because unused medications that are not disposed of properly can cause a myriad of serious public safety concerns.

For example, if unused medications stay in your medicine cabinet, they can fall into the hands of a child or teenager, who could accidentally overdose or begin an addiction. Criminals searching for drugs, especially opioids, may come into your house posing as a prospective homebuyer—or attempt a break-in.

Bins. These bins are safe and convenient disposal options for prescription and over-the-counter medications.

These convenient bins are a part of the California Statewide Drug Take-Back Program, which was funded by a \$3 million grant from the Department of Health Care Services, specifically its Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program aimed at combating the opioid crisis. This is a prelude to the statewide bill, Senate Bill 212, which was signed into law by then-Governor Jerry Brown on Sept. 30, 2018. SB 212 was a years-long effort by the

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE AND CLEAN

Medication take-back bins give residents an easy, responsible option

BY ANNE STOKES

Whether to cure disease, ease pain or prevent illness, prescription medications keep people healthy. Unfortunately, along with the power to heal, medications also have the potential to cause harm when misused or improperly discarded. Drug take-back bins provide safe and convenient ways to keep unused medications out of the environment and out of the hand of those who would misuse them.

Don't rush to flush

Even in the recent past, people were advised to flush unused medications down the drain or throw them away in the trash. Unfortunately, medications that end up in landfills or gets flushed down the toilet can pollute watersheds — the same watersheds that often supply communities' drinking water.

"When you throw it in the trash, there's a potential for contamination from this material," says Hans Kernkamp, general manager and chief engineer of the Riverside County Department of Waste Resources. "Taking it to the landfill — even though it's lined and hopefully does a good job of preventing groundwater contamination — nobody can say that it's 100 percent foolproof, so there's always that possibility."

Not getting rid of unused medications has its risks

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of 130 Americans die daily from opioid overdoses. In 2017, 36% of those opioid-related deaths involved *prescription* medications. Two-thirds of teens who admit to abusing painkillers say they got them out of home medicine cabinets. Each year, approximately 50,000 children under age 5 end up in emergency departments because of accidental poisoning.

"The risks of stockpiling are that somebody will get a hold

availability of medication take-back bins, disposal options are limited to flushing, throwing medications away in the trash, visiting a household hazardous waste facility or stockpiling them at home until a community take-back event happens. These options can increase the risk of misuse or contribute to environmental pollution.

"We have a pretty robust [medication take-back] program in the county, but we're a very large county — 7,200 square miles — so when you have an event, it has to cover a pretty large area, so the chances are somebody is

"The more good outlets that we have, like take-back bins, the better."

Hans Kernkamp
General manager and chief engineer, Riverside County Department of Waste Resources



of them that shouldn't have access to those prescriptions," says Kernkamp. "That's a real issue, you hear about that all the time where people have taken others' medication and misused it."

A better option

Without the convenience and

going to have to drive a good distance," says Kernkamp. "The more good outlets that we have, like take-back bins, the better."

To find a take-back bin near you, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.



WHAT GOES IN THE BINS?

- ▶ Prescription medications
- ▶ Over-the-counter medications
- ▶ Medicated ointments and lotions
- ▶ Pet medications



If possible, transfer pills into a zipped plastic bag before placing in the bin.



Leave medicated ointments and lotions tightly sealed in the original containers.



Obscure any personal information.

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WHAT DOESN'T GO IN THE BIN:

- ▶ Cannabis
- ▶ Illegal controlled substances (heroin, LSD, etc.)
- ▶ Medical sharps and needles
- ▶ Auto-injectors (such as EpiPen®)
- ▶ Iodine-containing medications
- ▶ Mercury thermometers
- ▶ Radiopharmaceuticals
- ▶ Chemotherapy or cytotoxic medications
- ▶ Compressed cylinders or aerosols (such as asthma inhalers)
- ▶ Vitamins and dietary supplements
- ▶ Business medical waste (waste from hospitals, clinics or medical, dental and veterinary practices)

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH UNUSED



Don't store them at home



- ✗ Those drugs may be taken by young children
- ✗ Or stolen by teens, family members, or visitors
- ✗ Which can lead to accidental overdoses



Don't flush them down the toilet



- ✗ Waste water treatment plants cannot remove drugs
- ✗ Leading to contamination of our streams, rivers, and lakes
- ✗ Which is harmful to animals, plants, and people



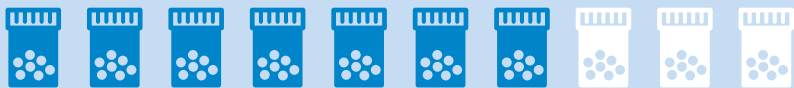
DON'T LEAVE DRUGS FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO TAKE

More than 1/2



More than half of all American adults take at least one prescription medication daily, with even more medications prescribed that are never taken.

7 out of 10



In California, 7 out of 10 opioid-related overdose deaths are due to prescription drugs.

DRUGS?

Putting your unused or unwanted medications in a drug take-back bin is the safest and most environmentally protective way to dispose of them.



Don't throw them in the trash



- ✗ These drugs may be taken out of the trash by others
- ✗ Which can lead to illegal use or sale
- ✗ Which fuels the opioid epidemic



Drop them off in a drug take-back bin



- ✓ You can discard of your drugs safely, conveniently, and anonymously
- ✓ They are completely destroyed through thermal destruction
- ✓ Therefore, they will not enter the environment

9.9 million

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 9.9 million Americans misuse controlled prescription drugs each year. The study showed the majority of abused prescription drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet and without their knowledge.

9,000



Nearly 9,000 emergency room visits in California annually are attributed to opioid drug overdoses.

MED BINS BECOME RESOURCE FOR COMMUNITY

Convenience a key to their success

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

California leads the nation in addressing issues that are vital to the public health and safety, and the environment. One crucial piece is the California Statewide Drug Take-Back Program, funded by the California Department of Health Care Services and administered by the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC).

The program targets the opioid crisis and the mishandling of other controlled and over-the-counter drugs. At its heart is a statewide network of Medication Take-Back Bins, placed in pharmacies, law-enforcement facilities, and hospitals with pharmacies for public use.

Anyone can anonymously deposit unused and expired medications into the bins, rather than endanger the environment and possibly lives by flushing them down the toilet, throwing them in the trash, or stockpiling them at home. The discarded drugs are incinerated at waste-to-energy plants.

In one way or another, thousands of people across California come into contact with this and similar models, including many in law enforcement.

One of them is Jodi Miller, the public information officer for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department (SBCSD).

The department contracts with smaller cities and towns throughout

by the public, as do pharmacies, city halls, fire departments, and family resource centers. A partial list of locations is at <https://wp.sbcounty.gov/dbh/>. A broader list is at the Drug Enforcement Administration site, www.dea.gov/diversion-control-division.

Though the Kaiser Permanente and Vons pharmacy chains are giants on the county's take-back bin scene, smaller

"It's important unused prescription drugs are disposed of correctly. We don't want them creating potential health and safety hazards."

Jodi Miller

Public Information Officer, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department

the county to supply police services. In addition, some municipalities maintain their own police stations independent of the SBCSD.

Between the two efforts, they maintain many take-back bins for use

venues are doing their part, too. The Running Springs Fire Department, near Big Bear Lake, is one.

"Our bin benefits the community immensely," said administrative assistant Dixi Willemse. "We see a



Jodi Miller

PHOTO COURTESY OF JODI MILLER

lot of elderly people coming in and dropping off expired medications."

In past years, the SBCSD has partnered with the DEA to co-host collection sites for the DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, held in April and October. Its program complements San Bernardino's take-back bin network and serves the same purpose, Miller said.

"The county's permanent bins are an ongoing resource to the public," she said. "It's very important the public be aware of their availability."

"And it's important unused prescription drugs are disposed of correctly," she added. "We don't want them creating potential health and safety hazards."

The message is clear, Miller said: "We encourage people to use the resources."



FIGHT THE OPIOID CRISIS

128 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose, says the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

45% of drug overdoses are estimated to be opioid-related. In California, that's more than **2,400 deaths** each year.

Millions of Americans are addicted to opioids, such as hydrocodone, morphine, and oxycodone. Abuse of these powerful painkillers takes a toll that goes far beyond individuals and their families.

\$78.5 billion represents the annual economic burden of opioid abuse, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This includes health care, treatment, law enforcement, and lost productivity.

Many people who misuse opioids get them from a friend or relative — often without that person's knowledge. By removing the risk of unused opioids in your home, you can help address the devastating opioid crisis affecting so many American families.

Proper disposal of unused prescription opioids saves lives.

KEY TO SUCCESS: SIMPLE, SAFE, CONVENIENT

Take-back bins help community avoid hazards of unused drugs

BY ANNE STOKES

"It should be as easy to return unused pharmaceuticals as it is to buy new ones," says John Davis, administrator for the Mojave Desert and Mountain Recycling Authority. He notes that there are hazards associated with less responsible disposal methods. "If you flush [medications], it goes into

wastewater treatment plants and eventually ends up in groundwater," he says. "Just throwing them into the trash can allow people to rummage through and pull them out for abuse."

Here are more answers to frequently asked questions about take-back bins:



Justin Weiss, CPSC Senior Associate, stands next to a bin installed as part of the California Drug Take-Back Program.

PHOTO BY BRAD SANBORN, CPSC SENIOR ASSOCIATE

How do medication take-back bins benefit the communities they're in?

Take-back bins provide convenient and secure disposal options for unused or expired medications. In the past, users were encouraged to flush medications down the drain or throw them away in the trash, both of which can contribute to pollution. Stockpiling medications in the home can also contribute to intentional misuse or accidental poisonings.

What can be disposed of in the bins?

Bins accept prescription and over-the-counter medications, medical patches, as well as pet medications and medicated ointments and lotions tightly sealed in their original containers. Disposal requirements are posted at each bin location.

What materials cannot be disposed of in the bins?

Illegal controlled substances such as marijuana, heroin or LSD for example, cannot be disposed of in the bins. For safety reasons, medical sharps and needles, compressed cylinders such

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John Davis

Administrator, Mojave Desert and Mountain Recycling Authority

as asthma inhalers, chemotherapy or radiopharmaceuticals should also not be disposed of in bins. Medical devices such as thermometers also cannot be disposed of in the bins. Sites will not be held responsible for materials deposited into bins.

What locations are suitable to host a take-back bin?

Pharmacies, hospitals with pharmacies, and law enforcement locations are suitable locations as they can provide proper management and security for materials.

What are sites responsible for handling?

Sites are responsible for maintaining bins and ensuring they are securely located inside. Once full, sites are responsible for scheduling material pick-ups and educating customers on what materials they can responsibly dispose of. Once the bin is full, site

staff is responsible for removing and sealing the package and liner for pick up.

Host sites may also be responsible for a monthly service fee for the collection and proper disposal of materials. Although costs may vary depending on a number of factors, the estimated service fee is \$165 a month.

Is there any assistance available for host sites?

The California Product Stewardship Council is available for technical assistance, including initial bin set-up and getting set up in the system for scheduling material pick-ups.

For more information on med bins, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.

For more information on what types of medications can be accepted or for take-back bin locations, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



WHY MEDICATION TAKE-BACK BINS WORK

“These take-back bins are a safe and convenient way for people to dispose of their unused medications, which will help fight prescription drug abuse and keep pharmaceuticals out of our water supply. **It’s a win for public health, the environment, and consumers.** As the author of SB 212, which created the first in the nation statewide drug and needle take-back program funded by the producers of these products, I am thrilled that millions of Californians throughout the state will be able to easily dispose of their unused medications.”

Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson
Santa Barbara

“The county’s permanent bins are an ongoing resource to the public. It’s very important the public be aware of their availability.”

Jodi Miller
Public Information Officer, San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department

“The risks of stockpiling are that somebody will get a hold of them that shouldn’t have access to those prescriptions. That’s a real issue, you hear about that all the time where people have taken others’ medication and misused it.”

Hans Kernkamp
General manager and chief engineer, Riverside County Department of Waste Resources



Where to find a medication take-back bin?

Many independent pharmacies, hospital pharmacies, and chain pharmacies now include medication take-back bins. Other non-medical facilities, such as law enforcement offices, also offer medication take-back bins for the public to use.

To find the nearest bin to where you live, use this interactive map at:
www.takebackdrugs.org



How does it work?

Follow these easy steps:

- 1 At home, if possible, remove pills and other solid medications from their containers and consolidate in a clear plastic zipper bag. Keep cream medication tightly sealed in their original containers. (NOTE: Keep medications in their child-proof container until just prior to drop off.)
- 2 Remove, mark out, or otherwise obscure personal information from solid and cream medication containers to protect your personal information. Recycle containers for solid medications in your household recycling, if applicable. See your local waste and recycling services provider’s website.
- 3 Bring zipper bag and any creams to a bin location and place in the bin. It’s that easy!



Questions?

✉ www.takebackdrugs.org @ info@calpsc.org ☎ 916.706.3420



California Product Stewardship Council

1822 21st St., Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95811

www.calpsc.org

facebook.com/CaliforniaPSC/



Department of Health Care Services

1500 Capitol Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95814

www.dhcs.ca.gov



California Opioid Safety Network

555 12th St., 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

510-285-5586

www.californiaopioidsafetynetwork.org



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