

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

Butte County
17 deaths
66 emergency department visits
238,026 prescriptions

Colusa County
0 deaths
1 emergency department visit
13,316 prescriptions

Glenn County
1 death
4 emergency department visits
23,111 prescriptions

Lake County
21 deaths

35 emergency department visits
67,044 prescriptions

Shasta County
10 deaths
71 emergency department visits
186,352 prescriptions

Sutter County
8 deaths
19 emergency department visits
79,620 prescriptions

Tehama County
2 deaths
24 emergency department visits
54,727 prescriptions

Yuba County
4 deaths
21 emergency department visits
67,486 prescriptions

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Learn how and why disposing of unused medication 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.

Where do you get rid of them safely?

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 Bins. These bins are safe and convenient disposal options

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.

"We know they keep opioids from unintended recipients, whether that is relatives or strangers," says Kristina Miller, city manager of Corning, California. "We have a significant amount of opioid use in our community and it starts by being prescribed opioids or getting access from a medicine cabinet. We see (bins) as one tool in our toolbox for addressing a nationwide problem."

Hosting a bin through this program is easy and free—installation, maintenance, disposal, and promotion. 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!

"We know (bins) keep opioids from unintended recipients, whether that is relatives or strangers."

Kristina Miller, city manager
Corning, California

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.

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, and — 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-Gov. Jerry Brown on Sept. 30, 2018. SB 212 was a years-long effort by the

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE AND CLEAN

Medication take-back bins provide easy disposal options

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 hands of those who would misuse them.

"Drugs are not disposable," says Steve Rodowick, who served as Butte County's recycling coordinator for 16 years before his recent retirement.

"There are a lot of benefits, but there is a lot of potential harm that can be caused by improper use."

Don't rush to flush

Even in the recent past, people were advised to flush unused medications down the drain. Unfortunately, what gets flushed down the toilet pollutes watersheds — the same watersheds that often supply communities' drinking water.

"Most wastewater treatment plants aren't set up

to capture the constituencies in pharmaceuticals before they're released into the waterways," explains Rodowick.

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

away [from children and teens] in a safe and secure location for proper destruction," says Rodowick.

A better option

Rodowick explains that up until recently there was no unified effort in the Butte County area to provide safe and responsible disposal options for medications at the end of their useful life. Today, there are several take-back bins located

throughout the community, with more planned to be installed in the future.

"[The] issue was that there were no convenient — or actually any inconvenient — locations to take them," says Rodowick, who used to

coordinate the medical sharps take-back bins. "Even though the signs on the drop door said, 'No medications,' there were medications in virtually all of these sharps bins. People were just looking for options to get rid of them and they weren't finding them, so they created their own."

To find a med bin near you, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.

"Drugs are not disposable. There are a lot of benefits, but there are a lot of potential harm that can be caused by improper use."

Steve Rodowick
Butte County recycling coordinator (retired)



medications. Those medications also pose a risk to children and teens. Two-thirds of teens who admit to abusing painkillers say they got them out of home medicine cabinets. And each year, approximately 50,000 children under age 5 end up in emergency rooms because of accidental poisoning.

"[Take-back bins] keep those pharmaceuticals that are languishing in medicine cabinets in people's homes ...



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



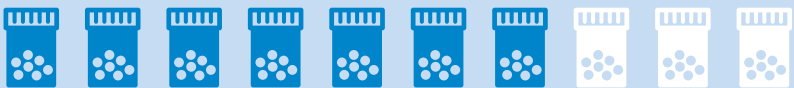
DON'T LEAVE DRUGS FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO TAKE

More than ½



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.

HELPING A CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Take-back bin at CSU-Chico is back in business

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 law-enforcement agencies, pharmacies and hospitals 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 touch

this chain of events, including Anel Anderson, pharmacist in charge at California State University, Chico. She was instrumental in getting a take-bin placed inside the campus Student Health Center Pharmacy last October, single handedly acquiring the funding.

"One of the reasons we wanted the bin is because our (student) population is one of the highest

For instance, when students move out of dormitories at the end of a semester, "Often they have leftover medication that was prescribed to them during the school year," she says. "What to do with it becomes an issue. The take-back bin is ideal for that."

In that regard, last semester's student move-out would have shown the bin's effectiveness, but "this year

recently reopened on a limited-hours, by-appointment schedule, and the bin is available again.

"Though the general public can access the bin, it's primarily used by CSU-Chico students, staff and faculty," Anderson says. "Everybody loves it because it's easily accessible and the process is anonymous and non-judgmental," she says. "People are very thankful for a safe place to dispose of medications."

With colleges focusing on remote learning still in flux, no one is quite sure when the pharmacy will return to its full-time schedule, but, Anderson says, "Hopefully, we'll be able to use the bin to its full potential again soon."

For more information, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.

"Everybody loves it because it's easily accessible and the process is anonymous and non-judgmental."

Anel Anderson
Pharmacist in charge, CSU, Chico



age groups (18 to 26) for coming into contact with medications they shouldn't have," Anderson says. "Our objective was to take away access to such medication that's laying around and not being used."

we didn't have a real move-out date."

Bin usage temporarily ended in March, when the pharmacy closed because of the coronavirus pandemic. However, the pharmacy



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.

CONVENIENT ANSWER TO COMMON PROBLEM

Bins can be an easy solution to dispose
of unwanted, unused medications

BY ANNE STOKES

Take-back bins prevent unused medications from being misused and keeps them from polluting the environment. We talked to Rachel Ross-Donaldson, agency manager for the Tehama County Solid Waste Management Agency, to understand how bins keep communities healthy.

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

Use of prescription drugs is very prevalent among Americans, with almost half of the adult population taking at least one prescription drug, and three quarters of the senior population taking two or more. According to one study published in the journal Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy, two out of three prescription drugs were reported to be unused. As a result of the vast amounts of unused or expired prescription drugs being so easily accessible, about 20% to 30% of drug abusers in California primarily use prescription drugs.

Additionally, there are environmental concerns regarding prescription drug disposal. According to the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], half of the water samples from wastewater treatment plants contained at least 25 different drugs. This is likely the result of in-home disposal via flushing.

Why did Tehama County implement the Med Bin program?

Beginning in 2008 and 2011, stakeholder groups began providing disposal options for home generated medical sharps and drugs, respectively, through a publicly funded permanent sharps disposal program and through DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration]-funded semiannual temporary drug take-back events. During this time, a total of 2,599 pounds of medicine and annual average of 2,700 gallons of medical sharps were collected from the local public, showing that there is a growing need for the programs. In order to meet the need for permanent medicine disposal, in 2016 and 2017, permanent drug collection kiosks were placed at the Tehama County Sheriff's Department and Corning Police Department, respectively.

Have the bins been well-received and used by the community?

Both kiosks are used by the public,

with an average of approximately 350 pounds of medicine being collected [annually] at each site. While this might seem relatively low for a countywide population of just over 65,000 residents, it's worth noting that collections hosted by law enforcement only collect approximately 7% of the unused drugs in the community. As such, we're looking forward to the implementation of SB-212 [Solid waste: pharmaceutical and sharps waste stewardship senate bill] programs and regulations.

What types of locations are suitable to host a bin?

Through our continuing sharps disposal program, the Agency has learned that take-back programs that offer convenient collection are the most successful. We've seen this data trend throughout the years, whereby our sharps collection kiosks located near doctor offices or pharmacies consistently collect a higher volume of sharps than those sited at unrelated locations, such as HHW [household hazardous waste] facilities or fire departments. Unfortunately, we

only have two medicine bins at the moment, but medicine would follow the same trend.

What types of materials can and cannot be accepted in the bins?

All pharmaceutical drugs can be deposited in our bins, [however,] we do not accept illegal substances, needles or sharps. Needles or sharps should be brought to a separate sharps kiosk or local household hazardous waste facility.

Is there any support hosting sites can receive from the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC)? From state or local governments?

We are looking forward to the implementation of SB-212 program, thereby establishing a free and more convenient program for our residents. CPSC's input in these regulations is highly valuable.

For more information, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.



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

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

"Providing medication and sharps take-back bins is an essential service for any city or county. My father was a diabetic. I saw him give himself a shot every day of his life since I was a child. Sharps containers and bins for unused medications or used needles are essential and should be convenient to consumers. My father always carefully disposed of his needles in a container that was provided to him by his doctor. As a child, I didn't think about where those needles ended up. Today, I think about all of our waste and where it goes. **Medical waste needs to be properly disposed of - particularly in light of the opioid crisis, environmental concerns, and for the safety of our youngest citizens.** This just makes sense."

Supervisor Debra Lucero
Butte County

"One of the reasons we wanted the bin is because our (student) population is one of the highest age groups (18 to 26) for coming into contact with medications they shouldn't have. **Our objective was to take away access to such medication that's laying around and not being used.** Often (students) have leftover medication that was prescribed to them during the school year. What to do with it becomes an issue. The take-back bin is ideal for that."

Anel Anderson, Pharmacist in Charge
California State University, Chico



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?

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