

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

San Diego County

268 deaths

769 emergency department visits

1,519,978 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.

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 bins) are very popular here and we have one in every quadrant of the city now," says Manuel Medrano, Chula Vista's environmental services manager. "The great benefit is getting unused medications out of the medicine cabinet and not flushing them down the drain. It's best to go through the proper disposal method where we know they are incinerated and there's no possible way they can get in our water supply."

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Manuel Medrano,
Environmental services manager, City of Chula Vista

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, and — specifically — its Medication Assisted Treatment 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

Hosting a bin through this program is easy and free—installation, maintenance, disposal and promotion. Bins can be placed in pharmacies, hospitals 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 energy facility and converted to renewable energy, a complete win-win.

'IT BENEFITS EVERYBODY'

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

BY ANNE STOKES

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of 130 Americans die from opioid overdoses every day. In 2017, 36% of those opioid-related deaths involved prescription medications. And it's not just a risk for teens and adults; young children are also in harm's way. Approximately 50,000 children under age 5 end up in emergency rooms annually because of accidental poisoning; 95% of those kids got into medicine cabinets on their own.

pounds of medications.

Lt. Matthew Cook of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department says the program has been well-received by residents.

"The program has been very successful and has had positive feedback from the public. Most people who utilize the boxes are elderly individuals who dispose of unused and expired medications from a spouse or family member who has passed away [or] parents who are afraid of their children getting a hold of these

can increase the risk of misuse or contribute to environmental pollution.

"People are very grateful the sheriff's department has these prescription drug boxes available for public use, otherwise the drugs would probably end up in the trash [or] flushed down the drain, ultimately damaging our natural resources," says Cook. "Removing dangerous drugs also prevents accidental overdoses in children and access for curious juveniles or adults with a drug dependency."

While disposing of unused medications at a take-back bin is easy and anonymous, Cook says unfortunately many San Diego County residents aren't aware of them.

"Drugs can be disposed of in a legal manner and people in the community don't have to worry about their kids getting exposed to prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications [and] the elderly don't have to worry about overdosing on old meds," he says. "It benefits everybody because it's a safe option for the community."

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

"The program has been a valuable resource to the citizens of San Diego County."

Lt. Matthew Cook
San Diego County Sheriff's Department

In 2010, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors approved a prescription drug take-back program to offer residents a safe way to dispose of unwanted medications. Today, the county has 26 pharmaceutical take-back bins located at sheriff stations, substations and jails, all of which are open to the public. Since the program started, it's collected a total of 128,113

medications," he says. "The program has been a valuable resource to the citizens of San Diego County."

Without the convenience and availability of pharmaceutical take-back bins, disposal options are primarily limited to flushing or throwing medications away in the trash or stockpiling them at home until a community take-back event happens. These options



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



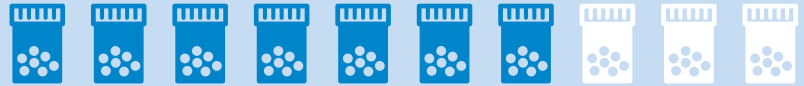
DON'T LEAVE DRUGS FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO TAKE

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.

GETTING UNWANTED DRUGS TO WHERE THEY CAN DO NO HARM

Instead of harming people or the environment, medications are incinerated

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 medicines. At its heart is a statewide network of Medication Take-Back Bins, placed in law-enforcement agencies, pharmacies 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 medicines are

incinerated at waste-to-energy plants.

In one way or another, thousands of people across California touch this process in some way, including Colleen Foster, Environmental Officer with Oceanside's Water Utilities Department.

"The program is ... one that we'll all benefit from and in many ways."

Colleen Foster
Environmental Officer, Oceanside
Water Utilities Department

Foster's involvement with the take-back program goes back years, she says. "I've served on the Board of Directors for CPSC for years and am glad to see that their years of hard work



Flavio Alfaro, Supervisor of Property & Evidence Unit, for the San Diego Sheriff's Department, shown in evidence room where drug boxes are received, processed, labeled, stored, and later disposed of according to law.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

installing these bins across the state are bearing fruit, most recently with the California Drug Take-Back Program, which resulted in a number of safe disposal med bins being installed in San Diego County and surrounding areas."

At the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, Flavio Alfaro, Supervisor of the Property & Evidence Unit, works to maintain 26 collection bins inside the lobbies of the department's stations, substations and jails throughout the county. Since the adoption of the program, it has collected "more than 128,000 pounds of miscellaneous medication for destruction," Alfaro says.

Feedback from the public has been "great," Flavio says. "People are always grateful to see so many new bins close in their county. Without the bins, unwanted medicine would likely fall into the wrong hands or end up polluting our environment," Alfaro says.

Foster and Alfaro share the belief

that unwanted medicines currently aren't disposed of correctly when residents throw them in their trash or flush them down the toilet.

In some cases, when the elderly store and consume unwanted medicines because they were mistaken for medicines that should be consumed, they cause irreparable harm. Both Foster and Alfaro believe that the elderly appreciate the new med bin options in their community and are among the most popular users of the med bins. The bins are also frequented by cautious parents concerned about their children getting access to medications.

"The program is a valuable resource for the citizens of San Diego County, one that we'll all benefit from and in many ways," says Foster.

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



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 SOLUTION TO COMMON PROBLEM

Frequently asked questions about
medication take-back bins

BY ANNE STOKES



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

Medication take-back bins provide a safe and responsible way to dispose of unused and expired medications. This secure disposal option keeps medications from polluting local watersheds and can help prevent both intentional misuse and accidental poisonings.

"It gives [the public] the option to properly dispose of their unwanted medications," says Flavio Alfaro, supervisor with the San Diego Sheriff's Office's Property and Evidence Unit. "It's been really positive with the public, they're very appreciative that the program is there for them."

How do pharmaceutical 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

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 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?

CPSC 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

"Prescription drug misuse and abuse is a critical and complex public health issue that impacts millions of Americans. Children and teens admit they are stealing prescription medications from their parents or the medicine cabinets of friends and relatives. **As a parent of three children, this terrifies me and every parent must be aware of the silent danger that may be sitting in their home.** The community can play an important role in preventing access to prescription drugs by promoting safe use, safe storage and safe disposal. Together, we can keep these addictive medications out of the hands of children and save lives."

Supervisor Kristin Gaspar
San Diego County

"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



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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