

### Safe Medication Disposal in the Community

The 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reported that 20.5 million Americans misused prescription medications at least once in the past year and 9.7 million Americans abused prescription pain relievers.<sup>1</sup> Over half of the abused prescription pain relievers were obtained 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 Prescription Drug Take Back Day hosted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) provide the public with thousands of collection sites across the country where unneeded medications can be safely and properly disposed. The event takes place twice a year in April and October. **The National Prescription Drug Take Back Day will be held on April 24, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Collection site information will be available at <https://takebackday.dea.gov>.<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 obtained. Illicit drugs, needles and syringes, auto-injectors, iodine-containing medications, chemotherapy and cytotoxic medications, aerosols, inhalers, and liquids are not accepted.<sup>5</sup> Participating locations 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>:

- Check the FDA flush list; drugs on the list should be flushed down the toilet.
- For medications not on the flush list:
  - Remove medication from the original container and scratch out any personal information on the medication label
  - Mix medication with an unpalatable substance such as used coffee grounds, dirt, or cat litter
  - Place the mixture in a sealable bag and dispose both the mixture and original container in household trash

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	Exalgo
Meperidine	Demerol
Methadone	Dolophine, Methadose
Methylphenidate	Daytrana transdermal patch system
Morphine	Arymo ER, Avinza, Embeda, Kadian, Morphabond ER, MS Contin
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. Department of Health and Human Services. Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. September 2020. 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 October 1, 2020. 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 21, 2021.
4. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Take Back Day. Retrieved from <https://takebackday.dea.gov/>. Accessed March 2, 2021.
5. California Product Stewardship Council. California Drug Take-Back Program. Retrieved from [takebackdrugs.org](https://takebackdrugs.org). Accessed March 2, 2021.
6. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Controlled Substance Public Disposal Locations – Search Utility. Retrieved from <https://apps2.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e3s1>. Accessed March 2, 2021.

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)