

# What you should know about medication safety, storage and disposal



**READY  
TO HELP**



Everyone can help prevent opioid misuse, abuse and addiction. To help keep your homes and communities safe, it's important to understand how to safely take, store and dispose of medication.

## Take medications safely

Here are some key factors to think about when it comes to your prescriptions. Taking these steps decreases your risk of harmful drug interactions.

- Talk to your doctor and pharmacist about the medications you take. Read the label on your prescription and take it exactly as prescribed.
- Always tell your doctors what medications you're taking and how much.
- Let your doctor know what over-the-counter medications you're taking, too. This includes vitamins and supplements.
- Use the same pharmacy for all your prescriptions.

**21.4% of people**  
12 and over have used illegal drugs  
or misused prescription drugs  
within the last year.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# What you should know about medication safety, storage and disposal

## Store medications correctly

Keep your family safe by correctly storing your medications. Here's how:

- Lock up opioids.
- Keep medications away from children and pets.
- Teach children that they should always have an adult present when taking medicine; it's not candy.
- Store your medication separate from that of others to avoid the risk of taking the wrong prescription.
- After taking medication, make sure the cap is locked tight; put it away immediately.
- Keep purses and bags containing medications in out-of-reach or locked areas, such as closets or drawers.

## Dispose of old medications

Forgotten medications will expire, which means that they become ineffective or toxic. Unfortunately, unused medications can end up with the wrong person. That's why it's important to properly dispose of them.



The most common type of substance exposure reported to poison control centers is illegal or misused prescription opioids.<sup>2</sup>

The easiest way to dispose of your expired or unused prescription is participate in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. Go to [takebackday.dea.gov](https://takebackday.dea.gov)\* to find drop-off locations and dates.

Another option is to take them to year-round take-back facilities. Find a local opioid drop-off location near you by using the online search tool at the [Drug Enforcement Administration](https://www.drugenforcement.com) website.\*

If you can't get to a take-back location, follow these steps to safely dispose of your medications:

- Remove medicine from prescription containers and remove or scratch out any personal information on the labels.
- Mix the medicine with cat litter, saw dust, coffee grounds or another absorbent substance. Avoid crushing pills or capsules.
- Place the mixture in a sealable bag and throw it away.

Make drug safety your top priority to ensure a safe environment for your home and community.

Learn more about prescription pain medicine safety at [bcbsm.com/opioids](https://bcbsm.com/opioids).

\*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network don't own or control this website.

<sup>2</sup>Drug Abuse Statistics