

# GOT LEFTOVER MEDICINE?

Before storing it, flushing it, or throwing it out with the trash, READ THIS.

For your safety. And for your family's.



- **Every 14 minutes**, an American dies from an unintentional drug overdose.
- Seven out of 10 people who abuse prescription drugs **get them from friends or family members**.
- Among children, emergency room visits for **accidental drug poisonings** are twice as common as poisonings for other household products (e.g., cleaning solutions).
- Flushing leftover medicines sends them into our **rivers, streams, and waterways** because wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove them.
- Studies have found **antibiotics, anti-seizure medicines, mood stabilizers, and sex hormones** in drinking water across the U.S.
- While the long-term human health effects of repeated exposure to low levels of these chemicals are not yet known, the effects on marine life are well-documented and include **serious harm to fish populations**.

**Don't flush!** Empty your medicine cabinet in a safer, healthier, and more environmentally responsible way.

## Drop Off

Some pharmacies, police stations, and sheriff's offices allow you to drop off your unwanted meds. One-day medicine collection events (such as those sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration) may also be available in your area. *However, only law enforcement agencies and some one-day collection events can accept controlled substances.* To find drop-off locations near you, visit:

[www.productstewardship.us/drugtakeback-locations](http://www.productstewardship.us/drugtakeback-locations)

## Mail Back

Some pharmacies and other organizations offer postage-paid envelopes for a small fee, which you can use to mail medicines to a safe disposal program. *However, mail-back programs cannot accept controlled substances.*

**controlled substance**  
/kʊh n-troʊhld/ suhb'-stuh ns\ n.  
1. Medicine or drug that is regulated by the government due to its addictive properties and potential for abuse. Examples include prescription painkillers, such as oxycodone (Percocet) and hydrocodone (Vicodin).

## Last Resort

ONLY if there are no drop-off sites or mail-back programs available near you, you can discard medicine in the trash by following these guidelines:

1. Cross out any personal information on your medicine bottle.
2. Empty your medicine into a sealable, disposable container. Add cat litter, coffee grounds, or another undesirable substance to discourage abuse.
3. Discard the sealed container with your household trash.
4. Recycle (whenever possible) the empty medicine bottle.

Learn more: [www.productstewardship.us/drugtakeback](http://www.productstewardship.us/drugtakeback)