

Discarding Unused Medication



Every day, 2,000 teenagers use a prescription drug to get high for the first time.

They're primarily accessing these drugs in homes. It can be as easy as opening a cupboard, drawer or medicine cabinet. Prescription drugs are not exempt from causing harm to your teenager. The scary statistic-12 to 17-year-olds abuse prescription drugs more than they abuse ecstasy, crack, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine combined.

But, the good news. There are steps you can take to help protect teens and others from prescription drug abuse: monitor the family's prescriptions, secure them tightly in a locked cabinet, and properly dispose of expired and leftover medications by depositing the prescription and over the counter drugs in MedReturn boxes located at police stations throughout New York State. This is the safe way to dispose of prescription medications, patches, ointments, samples, plus vitamins, over-the-counter medications, and pet medications.

Safe Disposal Options

Contact your municipality to see if they offer household pharmaceutical collections in partnership with local law enforcement.

Take advantage of National Drug Take-Back Day. Twice a year - April and October - the federal Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) holds a national take back day. Learn more about National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html

Visit your local pharmacy to purchase pre-addressed envelopes to mail unwanted medications for incineration.

As a last resort, follow these instructions for putting medications in the trash:

- Mix medications (do not crush tablets or capsules) with water and then add salt, ashes, dirt, cat litter, coffee grounds, or another undesirable substance to avoid accidental or intentional misuse of drugs.
- Do not conceal discarded drugs in food.
- Place all medications in an outer container, such as sealable bag, box, or plastic tub to prevent discovery and removal from the trash. Seal the container with strong tape.
- Dispose of drugs as close to your trash collection day as possible to avoid misuse and/or misdirection.

Learn more: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/67720.html>

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Substance Abuse Services