

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 room

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 room visits

19.8 million prescriptions

Sacramento County

70 deaths

397 emergency room visits

981,793 prescriptions

Solano County

19 deaths

110 emergency room visits

277,436 prescriptions

San Joaquin County

26 deaths

130 emergency room visits

474,378 prescriptions

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Learn how and why disposing of unused medications 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 take-back programs address a very important public health and safety issue," says Bob Davila, a spokesperson for the California State Board of Pharmacy. "Providing a safe way to dispose of (unused medications) keeps them from being abused or sold on the street, but also addresses a very important environmental issue. ...We just want people to be aware they are available in our community."

Hosting a bin through this program is easy and free—installation, maintenance, disposal and promotion. Bins can be placed in pharmacies, hospitals with pharmacies 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.

"Providing a safe way to dispose of (unused medications) keeps them from being abused or sold on the street, but also addresses a very important environmental issue."

Bob Davila, spokesperson
California State Board of Pharmacy

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, 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-Governor Jerry Brown on Sept. 30, 2018. SB 212 was a years-long effort by the

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE

Pharmaceutical take-back bins are a responsible and convenient option

BY ANNE STOKES

When Gretchen Olsen's father passed away, she was left with all of his unused medications and nowhere to take them.

"There was literally a good-sized box that I needed to get rid of with my father's medications," she says. "I had to ... mix it with coffee grounds and kitty litter and throw it away, hiding it in a garbage bag. That was the recommendation of the county I was in."

best you can and not make it attractive for anybody to (mis) use."

Don't Rush to Flush

Even in the recent past, people were advised to throw unused medications in the trash or flush it down the drain. Unfortunately, both methods contribute to pollution. Most modern wastewater treatment facilities can't remove pharmaceuticals, meaning what gets flushed down the toilet pollutes watersheds —

Prevention, approximately 50,000 children under age 5 end up in the emergency room each year due to unintentional overdoses; of those incidents, 90% happened while the child was without an adult's or caregiver's supervision. Prescription medications also pose a risk to older children: Two-thirds of teens, who admit to abusing painkillers, say they got them out of home medicine cabinets.

A Better Option

Until recently, Tuolumne County had just one pharmaceutical take-back bin located at the Sheriff's office. Thanks to the DHCS grant, three additional bins were added in the county. With the new legislation that is set to take effect statewide, residents will have even more locations to choose from, all funded by pharmaceutical manufacturers.

"That really makes it so that we can focus on educating (the public) and getting the word out instead of trying to find money to buy the bins and pay a contractor to come and dispose of all that," she says. "That's going to be really helpful for us in having the pharmaceutical manufacturers fund that."

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

the same watersheds that often supply communities' drinking water.

"For the longest time, even federal agencies were saying it was OK to flush them down the toilet," Olsen says. "That, of course, is not a good idea and wastewater facilities hate to see that kind of information going out."

Not getting rid of unused pharmaceuticals has its risks. According to the Centers for Disease Control and

"Now the County has more easy and convenient options for medicine take-back."

Gretchen Olsen

Solid waste manager, Tuolumne County Public Works Department

Olsen, who is the Tuolumne County Public Works' solid waste manager, says that even though more responsible methods of disposing of those unused pharmaceuticals exist, none of those options were available to her at the time.

"I've been in the solid waste industry for (more than) 30 years, so I knew that it wasn't the ideal way to do it," she says. "But if there is no other way to do it, you try to contain the medicine, seal it up the



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 UNUSUALLY



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



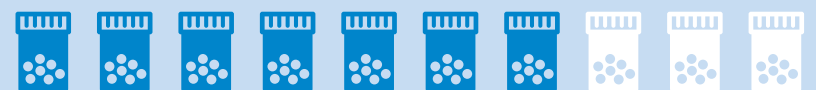
DON'T LEAVE DRUGS FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO TAKE

More than $\frac{1}{2}$



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.

UNUSED 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.

A PIONEER IN THE TAKE-BACK MODEL

For the Sacramento State University pharmacist, combating drug misuse is also a matter of education

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

California leads the nation in addressing issues that are vital to public health and safety — and the environment. One crucial piece is the California Statewide Drug Take-Back Program, administered by the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC).

The program targets the opioid crisis and the mishandling of controlled (and over-the-counter) drugs. At its heart, it is a statewide network of Medication Take-Back Bins, placed in pharmacies, hospitals with pharmacies, and law enforcement agencies for public use.

Anyone can anonymously deposit unused and expired medications into the bins, rather than endanger people and the environment by flushing them down the toilet, throwing them in the trash, or stockpiling them at home. The discarded drugs are sent to waste-to-energy plants, and incinerated for renewable energy.

In one way or another, thousands

of people across California touch this chain of events, including Janet Dumonchelle, the pharmacist in charge at Sacramento State University, and a pioneer in the take-back model.

"Hearing about the gravity of the problem at seminars on prescription drug misuse in 2012 inspired me to explore how we could jump in with

"People are so thankful to find a safe and environmentally correct way to dispose of medications."

Janet Dumonchelle
Pharmacist in charge, CSU Sacramento

both feet and help contribute to the solution," she says. "It was (destiny) that I was then introduced to the CPSC."

Through a CPSC grant, she was able to procure a bin for the campus

Student Health Services pharmacy in 2013. "We were the first in Sacramento County to have one, but it took a village to make our program a

reality," Dumonchelle says.

That grant predated the current CPSC statewide program and new and updated regulations from the California State Board of Pharmacy and the Drug Enforcement Administration, Dumonchelle explains.



The Student Health Services pharmacy at Sacramento State University got the first medication take-back bin in Sacramento County — thanks to pharmacist Janet Dumonchelle.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET DUMONCHELLE

Community participation at the Sac State pharmacy has been a major success, with more than 3,400 pounds of drugs collected to date. For context, the DEA estimates that one pound is "about 500 pills," Dumonchelle says, which is equal to about 1.7 million pills.

"People are so thankful to find a safe and environmentally correct way to dispose of medications," she says.

Dumonchelle and her colleagues continue to promote the take-back bin at educational seminars, on and off campus. For instance, they have partnered on workshops with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the DEA, Sacramento County, and their own university.

"Educating the public is an ongoing process," she says.



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.

INTERESTED IN HOSTING A TAKE-BACK BIN?

Find out what it takes

BY ANNE STOKES

Medication take-back bins keep communities safe and clean. To learn what it takes to host one, we talked to San Joaquin County Supervisor Bob Elliott and Yolo County Central Landfill Waste Reduction and Sustainability Manager Marissa Juhler.



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

How do medication take-back bins benefit the communities in which they're located?

Bob Elliott: These bins will provide an easy way for the public to dispose of unused or expired opioids and other medications in a safe manner. In the long run, the bins will help to alleviate our growing opioid abuse problem by removing these drugs from an obvious and easily accessible source — our medicine cabinets.

Marissa Juhler: Environmental harm can come from residents flushing meds down toilets or sinks or improperly disposing of them in the trash, where they can end up polluting watersheds. Take-back bins provide a convenient means for residents to do the right thing with their expired medications, protecting both their health as well as the environment.

What types of places are suitable to host a take-back bin?

Marissa Juhler: Pharmacies, hospitals with pharmacies and law enforcement locations. Host locations would be responsible for maintaining a bin, keeping it secure, educating customers about the benefits of the program and scheduling pharmaceutical pickups. Bins are also required to be located inside a building, within view of a pharmacist or law enforcement officer, and equipped with double-locking doors for security purposes.

What types of medications are accepted at the take-back bin locations?

Marissa Juhler: You can bring in prescription and over-the-counter medications. While some locations can only accept non-controlled substances, all of Yolo County's kiosks accept both controlled and non-controlled medications because

most residents cannot be expected to know which drugs are controlled and non-controlled. Due to federal and state regulations, we only see pharmacies and law enforcement offices as options where both can be accepted. However, residents cannot use bins to dispose of medical sharps and needles, vitamins and dietary supplements, aerosol containers like asthma inhalers, chemotherapy or radiopharmaceuticals, business medical waste, marijuana, or illegal controlled substances like meth or heroin.

What are the costs and requirements involved in hosting a bin?

Bob Elliott: While the current program that the county administers is expensive, CPSC placed additional bins for free in the county under the grant program. The hope is that CPSC will be able to continue the program after August of 2020, so that it may continue to be free for the med bin hosts.

Marissa Juhler: A weekly or monthly service fee (would be) incurred by the pharmacy for contracting out the collection and proper disposal of these materials. Pharmacies would be responsible for maintaining a bin, keeping it secure, educating customers about the benefits of the program, and scheduling pickups. Meds are then hauled off to an incinerator for destruction. Through CPSC's grant program, this is all free to the med bin host through at least August 2020.

As host locations, what support can businesses receive from local and state agencies?

Bob Elliott: The host location can be promoted with other drop-off sites through the local Opioid Safety Coalition, Department of Public Works, and public health departments. CPSC will also list their location information on its online maps.

For more information on what types of pharmaceuticals can be accepted, take-back bin locations or to apply for a bin, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



WHY MEDICATION TAKE-BACK BINS WORK

“As a doctor, I cannot stress enough how important it is to safely dispose of any expired or unused medications. **Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, and disposing of them properly is crucial for preventing abuse.** These take-back bins will make it easier and safer for our community members to dispose of their unused or expired medications.”

Rep. Ami Bera
Elk Grove

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Supervisor Bob Elliott
San Joaquin County

“Environmental harm can come from residents flushing meds down toilets or sinks or improperly disposing of them in the trash, where they can end up polluting watersheds. **Take-back bins provide a convenient means for residents to do the right thing with their expired medications, protecting both their health as well as the environment.**”

Marissa Juhler, Waste Reduction and Sustainability Manager
Yolo County



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?

✉ www.takebackdrugs.org @ info@calpsc.org ☎ 916.706.3420



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