

# Disposal of Unused Medicines: What You Should Know

*Learn how to dispose of unused or expired drugs*

en Español (</drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/eliminacion-de-medicamentos-no-utilizados-todo-lo-que-debe-saber>)

## How to Safely Dispose of Unused or Expired Medicine



## Video: How to Safely Dispose of Unused or Expired Medicine

Drug disposal options to consider and instructions for getting rid of unused or expired medicines

Transcript (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/ensuring-safe-use-medicine/how-safely-dispose-unused-or-expired-medicine-video-transcript>)

## How to Safely Dispose of Unused or Expired Medicine

- The best way to dispose of **most types\*** of unused or expired medicines (both prescription and over the counter) is to drop off the medicine at a drug take back site, location, or program (</drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-drug-take-back-locations>). **immediately**.
- If you cannot get to a drug take back location promptly, or there is none near you, **and** your medicine is
  - on the FDA flush list (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-flush-potentially-dangerous-medicine#FlushList>), your next best option is to immediately flush these potentially dangerous medicine down the toilet (</drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-fdas-flush-list-certain-medicines>).

- **not** on the [flush list](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-flush-potentially-dangerous-medicine#FlushList) (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-flush-potentially-dangerous-medicine#FlushList>), you should follow these [instructions to discard the medicine in your trash at home](/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-dispose-non-flush-list-medicine-trash) (</drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-dispose-non-flush-list-medicine-trash>).

\*Check out the [Medication Disposal Q&A](/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-questions-and-answers) (</drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-questions-and-answers>) for more information including how to dispose of needles and syringes.

**FDA U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION**

I need to get rid of this medication.

# Drug Disposal Options

Do you have medicine you want to get rid of?

Do you have a drug take-back option readily available?

Check the [DEA website](#), as well as your local drugstore and police station for possible options.

**NO**

**YES**

Is it on the [FDA flush list](#)?

**NO**

Follow the FDA [instructions for disposing of medicine in the household trash](#).

**YES**

[Immediately flush your medicine in the toilet.](#) Scratch out all personal info on the bottle and recycle/throw it away.

Take your medicine to a drug take-back location.

Do this promptly for [FDA flush list](#) drugs!

www.fda.gov

[Drug Disposal Options Infographic \(/media/111887/download\)](/media/111887/download) (PDF; 2.1MB)

# Remove *the* RISK

[\(/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/safe-opioid-disposal-remove-risk-outreach-toolkit\)](/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/safe-opioid-disposal-remove-risk-outreach-toolkit)

Use our [Safe Opioid Disposal - Remove the Risk Outreach Toolkit \(/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/safe-opioid-disposal-remove-risk-outreach-toolkit\)](/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/safe-opioid-disposal-remove-risk-outreach-toolkit), which contains public service announcements (PSAs), social media posts and images, fact sheets, and more, for talking with others about safe opioid disposal (Updated 10/1/2020) **NEW**