



Safe Disposal

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The safe disposal of unused and expired medication is a key part of preventing prescription drug misuse. This is especially true of medications such as opioids that can cause dependency and addiction.

Safe disposal of medication removes pills from homes where they could potentially be misused or stolen by family members or guests. Practicing safe disposal makes sure medications are destroyed in a legal and environmentally safe manner.

This chapter has important information about prescription medication safe disposal and resources, as well as funding opportunities that can help establish a permanent collection location in your community. Use this chapter if you:

- Are interested in establishing one or more permanent collection drop boxes in your community;
- Want to hold a safe disposal event; and/or
- Would like public awareness materials that can help promote safe medication disposal.

Safe Disposal Options

Your community is likely to have many households that have medications that need to be discarded. This can include controlled substances such as opioid pain relievers, stimulants, and sedatives. With few exceptions, medications should not be thrown in the garbage or flushed down the toilet. Doing so has a negative impact on the environment and could allow the medication to be taken from the trash and used improperly.



For more information about safe disposal, go to www.takemedback.org.



Several options exist to properly dispose of prescription drugs. Prescription drug take-back programs give people a safe way to get rid of these medications. Permanent collection sites can be established in pharmacies, hospitals, and clinics that meet certain criteria, or police departments and sheriffs' offices. One-day collection events held in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, such as the Drug Enforcement Agency's National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day (held annually in April and October), can collect hundreds of pounds of medication. Drugs collected by either method are secured and incinerated at an approved facility.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) coordinates the state's take-back program and can provide you with information about creating a permanent collection site in your community. The CDPHE has funding to help law enforcement departments and pharmacies establish permanent collection boxes free of charge. It also can provide information about how to plan and run a take-back event. For more information, contact Greg Fabisiak, the program's administrator, at greg.fabisiak@state.co.us.

Private entities such as Walgreens also operate take-back programs that are independent of the CDPHE program. Pharmacies and law enforcement agencies are able to create their own take-back programs, but they would not be eligible for state funding.

Resources

Colorado Household Medication Take-Back Program

This program is managed and funded by the CDPHE and is expanding with a goal of establishing at least one permanent collection location in every Colorado county. As of April 1, 2019, there are 154 permanent take-back boxes located in 60 of Colorado's 64 counties, and the program has collected more than 57,000 pounds of unused and expired medication. You can find an interactive map of collection sites at www.takemededback.org.

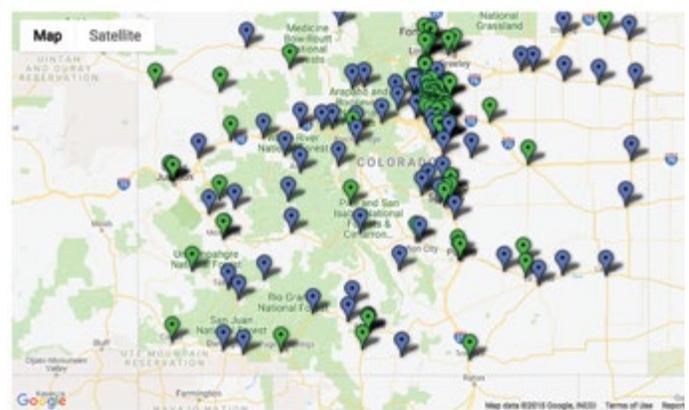


A video explaining how the program provides value to communities is online at vimeo.com/229579584.

The CDPHE website lists what substances can and cannot be collected and includes a list of collection sites as well as an interactive map. The website is www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/colorado-medication-take-back-program.

Take Meds Back Public Awareness Campaign

TAKE MEDS BACK DISPOSAL OPTIONS



Take Meds Back is a public awareness campaign launched in 2017 to highlight the importance of safe medication disposal and to inform the public about where they can find collection sites. Information and resources are available on its website, www.takemededback.org. Additional information about this campaign is available in the Public Awareness chapter of this community reference.

A Guide to Creating an Ongoing Household Medication Take-Back Program In Your Community

This guide from the CDPHE will help you establish a permanent household medication take-back program in your community. The guide is online at www.takemedsseriously.org/wp-content/uploads/Household-Medication-Program-Guide-Nov-2017.pdf.

A Guide to Holding a Household Medication Take-Back Event In Your Community

This guide from the CDPHE will help you plan and host a medication take-back event in your community.



The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention's Safe Disposal Informational Brochure is available to distribute. To download visit the groups website.

Safe Disposal Informational Flyer

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention has created a flyer about safe medication storage that organizations can distribute. To download the brochure, go to the Safe Disposal Work Group website, www.corxconsortium.org/safe-disposal-work-group/.

Videos



The CDPHE and the Consortium have created educational videos you can use to inform the public and key stakeholders about safe prescription drug disposal.



The guide is online at www.takemedsseriously.org/wp-content/uploads/Household-Medication-Take-Back-Event.pdf.

Safe Disposal Informational Brochure

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention has created a brochure about safe medication disposal that organizations can distribute. To download the brochure, go to the Safe Disposal Work Group's website, www.corxconsortium.org/safe-disposal-work-group/. A Spanish brochure also is available. Both brochures can be ordered from the Consortium online at www.corxconsortium.org/order/.

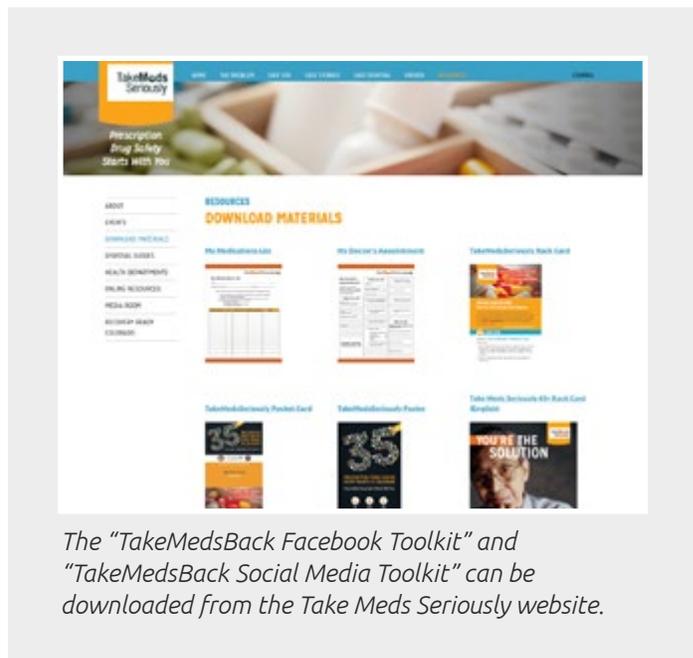
Two videos are available at vimeo.com/corxconsortium:

- **“Community Value”**: a short video featuring testimonials explaining how easy it is to set up a permanent publicly accessible household medication take-back drop box. This video is targeted for pharmacies and law enforcement agencies, but anyone can view it who would like to learn more about the benefits of permanent collection sites.
- **“Safe Disposal and You”**: a short video for general audiences that is a primer on how to dispose of medications safely.

Broadcast Public Service Announcements

The CDPHE and the Consortium worked with the Colorado Broadcasters Association to produce television and radio public service announcements (PSAs) that aired as part of the Take Meds Back campaign. The campaign produced 15- and 30-second PSAs in English and Spanish. The television PSAs are posted online at vimeo.com/corxconsortium.

Social Media Assets



Social media assets for Twitter and Facebook were developed as part of the Take Meds Back campaign. The “TakeMedsBack Facebook Toolkit” and “TakeMedsBack Social Media Toolkit” can be downloaded from the Take Meds Seriously website, viewable at takemedsseriously.org/resources/toolkit.





The Consortium's Safe Disposal Work Group

The Consortium's Safe Disposal Work Group focuses on issues relating to the safe storage and disposal of prescription medications with the potential for misuse, abuse, or diversion. It works with community coalitions to help raise awareness of the importance of safe medication disposal. It also works with law enforcement and pharmacies to facilitate the creation of permanent collection sites.

The Safe Disposal Work Group's goals include installing a permanent take-back collection box in every county in Colorado and increasing public awareness of the importance of safe disposal.

If you have an interest in this area or have questions about this topic, reach out to the program manager at pm@corxconsortium.org. If you would like to join or get more information about the work group, please visit www.corxconsortium.org/safe-disposal-work-group. You can also join by emailing info@corxconsortium.org.

Safe Disposal Work Group Co-Chairs

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