

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

Orange County

252 deaths

799 emergency department visits

1,399,866 prescriptions

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Learn how and why disposing of unused medication is important—and easy

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.

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.

"The take-back bins help by giving the people a place to put their medications so that it doesn't harm others or the environment," says Sgt. Brian Gunsolley, of the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Public Affairs and Community Engagement division. "There's lots of medications in circulation out there. So we need to have a robust take-back program."

And best of all, the drugs are ultimately incinerated at a waste-to-energy facility and converted to energy. It's a complete win!

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Sgt. Brian Gunsolley
Orange County Sheriff's Department, Public Affairs and Community Engagement division

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, and — specifically — its Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) 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-Gov. Jerry Brown on Sept. 30, 2018. SB 212 was a years-long effort by the

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE AND CLEAN

Medication take-back bins provide easy disposal options

BY ANNE STOKES

Whether to cure disease, ease pain or prevent illness, prescription medications keep people healthy. Unfortunately, along with the power to heal, drugs also have the potential to cause harm when misused or improperly discarded. Drug take-back bins provide safe and convenient ways to keep unused medications out of the environment and out of the hand of those who would misuse them.

“Take-back bins provide a safe place for people to put their unwanted or expired medications,” says Sgt. Brian Gunsolley of the Orange County Sheriff’s Department. “There’s so much medication being dispensed into the community, we want to get rid of and get it out of the environment so that young people won’t have an opportunity to use that medication.”

Don’t rush to flush

Even in the recent past, people were advised to flush unused medications down the drain or throw them away in the trash. Unfortunately, most wastewater treatment facilities can’t remove pharmaceuticals, meaning what gets flushed down the drain pollutes the same watersheds that often supply communities’ drinking water.

Not getting rid of unused medications has its risks

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of 130 Americans die daily from opioid overdoses. In 2017, 36% of those opioid-related deaths involved prescription medications. Two-thirds of

teenagers: They can get addicted, they can overdose, they can go to a party and mix it with alcohol or other drugs and that can be fatal.”

A better option

According to Gunsolley, one of the most common reasons people don’t use medication take-back bins is the fact they

“One of our biggest problems is that kids are getting their hands on these medications.”



Sgt. Brian Gunsolley
Orange County Sheriff’s Department

teens who admit to abusing painkillers say they got them out of home medicine cabinets. And each year, approximately 50,000 children under age 5 end up in emergency departments because of accidental poisoning.

“One of our biggest problems is that kids are getting their hands on these medications. They go over to grandma and grandpa’s house where there are lots of medications and they’ll take some pills,” Gunsolley explains. “That’s really dangerous for

don’t know the resource exists.

“A lot of people say, ‘I know I’m not supposed to throw it in the trash, but I didn’t know where else to put them,’” he says. “The last time we did a take-back [event], we took in a little over 3,000 pounds of medications in just the sheriff’s department-sponsored areas; that’s not counting the whole county.”

To find a take-back bin near you, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.



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.



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 UNUSED



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.

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.

BINS FILL A NEED IN ORANGE COUNTY

Public has been receptive to the idea

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

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

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

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

In one way or another, thousands of people across California come into

contact with this and similar models, including many in law enforcement.

Among them is Sgt. Dennis Breckner of the Orange County Sheriff's Department, headquartered in Santa Ana.

Santa Margarita. While stationed there, Sgt. Breckner oversaw its take-back program through direct interaction with the public, as the station lacked the appropriate space to secure a bin.

"(Bin programs) clear our homes of unused medications that could possibly hurt somebody. The last thing we need is (unwanted) medications being accessible."

Sgt. Dennis Breckner
Orange County Sheriff's Department

From a law-enforcement perspective, Sgt. Breckner says, "(Bin programs) clear our homes of unused medications that could possibly hurt somebody. The last thing we need is (unwanted) medications being accessible."

The OCSD contracts with cities throughout Orange County to supply their police services, including

"People were very receptive," he said. "They tended to be those who had a family member who had passed away, and they didn't know what to do with the medication."

There are upward of 50 take-back bins throughout Orange County. Many are CPSC-sponsored, while others are placed by municipalities or by pharmacies such as CVS and



Sgt. Dennis Breckner sees the need for drug take-back bins.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Walgreens. "We get questions all the time about where the bins are located," Sgt. Breckner said. (For a guide, go to www.oilandfills.com).

In past years, Sgt. Breckner has partnered with the Drug Enforcement Administration to co-host a collection site for the DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, held in April and October. The next event is scheduled Oct. 24.

The biannual DEA program complements Orange County's take-back bin network and serves the same purpose, Sgt. Breckner points out.

"They're both critical, but I know the public is interested in having something that's more readily available," he said. "More bins would be very beneficial."

For more information, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.



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.

CONVENIENT SOLUTION TO COMMON PROBLEM

Frequently asked questions about medication take-back bins

BY ANNE STOKES

“Collection bins provide a safe and convenient place for consumers to get rid of unused, unwanted, or expired medications from their homes,” says Bob Dávila, spokesman for the California State Board of Pharmacy. “Providing a secure location to dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medications also keeps drugs – especially opioids – out of reach of abusers. In addition, collection bins help protect the environment by keeping dangerous drugs and chemicals out of landfills and water supplies.”

Here are answers to some frequently asked questions about the medication take-back bin program, provided by the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC):

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

Take-back bins provide convenient and secure disposal options for unused or expired medications. In the past, users were encouraged to flush medications down the drain or throw them away in the trash, both of which can contribute to pollution. Stockpiling medications in the home can also contribute to intentional misuse or accidental poisonings.

What can be disposed of in the bins?

Bins accept prescription and over-the-counter medications, medical patches, as well as pet medications and medicated ointments and lotions tightly sealed in their original containers. Disposal requirements are posted at each bin location.

What materials cannot be disposed of in the bins?

Illegal controlled substances such as marijuana, heroin or LSD for example, cannot be disposed of in the bins. For safety reasons, medical sharps and needles, compressed cylinders such as asthma inhalers, chemotherapy or radiopharmaceuticals should also not be disposed of in bins. Medical devices such as thermometers also

cannot be disposed of in the bins. Sites will not be held responsible for materials deposited into bins.

What locations are suitable to host a take-back bin?

Pharmacies, hospitals with pharmacies, and law enforcement locations are suitable locations as they can provide proper management and security for materials.

What are sites responsible for handling?

Sites are responsible for maintaining bins and ensuring they are securely located inside. Once the bin is full, site staff are responsible for removing and sealing the package and liner, and then scheduling it for pick up. They also are responsible for educating customers

regarding what materials they may place in the bins.

Is there any assistance available for host sites?

CPSC is available for technical assistance, including initial bin set up and getting set up in the system for scheduling material pick-ups.

For more information, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.



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

For more information on what types of pharmaceuticals can be accepted and take-back bin locations, visit www.takebackdrugs.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



WHY MEDICATION TAKE-BACK BINS WORK



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!

"These take-back bins are a **safe and convenient way for people to dispose of their unused medications, which will help fight prescription drug abuse and keep pharmaceuticals out of our water supply.** It's a win for public health, the environment, and consumers. As the author of SB 212, which created the first in the nation statewide drug and needle take-back program funded by the producers of these products, I am thrilled that millions of Californians throughout the state will be able to easily dispose of their unused medications."

Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson
Santa Barbara

"**Drug take-back bins provide a safe place for consumers to dispose of their unused, unwanted or expired medications,** including opioids and other controlled substances. Proper disposal of prescription medications protects the public by keeping dangerous drugs off the street."

Bob Dávila
California State Board of Pharmacy



Questions?

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