



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Have Unused Medications Overstayed Their Welcome?

Careful storage and disposal of medications is important to prevent accidents in the home. Leftover medications that are within easy reach can be dangerous to children and pets. Medications that are not securely stored may be accessed by family members or visitors and cause harm. Even a single dose of some medications can cause serious harm or death.

There may be many reasons why medications are kept in a person's home, including:

- Medications are simply "put away" after an illness
- Medications are thought to be needed in the future
- Family members don't know what to do with medications that are left over after a loved one dies

SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following recommendations for consumers to safely store and dispose of medications:

- Store your medications out of sight in a cabinet that is out of the reach of children and pets. Ideally, opioids should be stored in a locked cabinet or box.
- Regularly check for unneeded and expired medications.
- Return unneeded and expired medications to a safe disposal location. Most pharmacies have programs to safely destroy medication and keep it out of the environment. Check with your pharmacy or go to www.healthsteward.ca and type in your postal code for a list of participating locations that accept medication returns. You can also call 1-844-535-8889 for more information.

Read some additional tips about safe medication storage and disposal:

- [Safe Disposal of Medications](https://safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter_disposal.html) – https://safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter_disposal.html
- [Opioids – Be an Informed Consumer](https://safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/question-opioids.html) – <https://safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/question-opioids.html>

Medication safety bulletins contribute to Global Patient Safety Alerts.

This newsletter was developed in collaboration with Best Medicines Coalition and Patients for Patient Safety Canada.

Recommendations are shared with healthcare providers, through the ISMP Canada Safety Bulletin, so that changes can be made together.

This newsletter shares information about safe medication practices, is noncommercial, and is therefore exempt from Canadian anti-spam legislation.

TAKE IT BACK!

Responsibly return unused and expired medication.



You Can Return:

- All prescription medications
- Over-the-counter drugs
- Natural health products
- Inhalers