

Protect yourself and others by storing medications more safely, and returning any expired, unused, or unwanted drugs as soon as possible.

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## Patient Information

# Storage and Disposal of Opioids





## Be informed. Take action.

Poisonings can happen when children or pets can reach these medications, or when other people mistake one medication for another. Even a single dose of a drug can be very dangerous to someone else.

Most youth who use prescription drugs for recreational purposes get their drugs from their own home or from friends.



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### Be Informed

- Opioids (or narcotics) are medicines used to treat pain. Codeine, fentanyl, hydromorphone, morphine, oxycodone, methadone, tramadol, and buprenorphine are commonly prescribed opioids. If you are unsure whether one of your medicines is an opioid, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.
- Ask your doctor if you can be prescribed the smallest number of pills for the shortest period of time necessary that will help with your condition.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure of what to do with your medications if they are no longer needed.

### Take Action - Here's what to do

- Store narcotics and other dangerous drugs in a locked container separate from other drugs and out of reach and sight of children and others. Buying a small lockable container at a pharmacy, hardware store or online may cost more, but a locked box may save someone else from danger.
- Avoid keeping pills in a bag or purse; the medications are too easily mistaken for candy by children or too easily stolen.
- Bring back any unused or unwanted medications to your pharmacy or look for special medication disposal programs in your community.
- Check your medicine cabinets and return any expired or unused medications, including over-the-counter drugs. Any drug or bottle that cannot be identified should also be returned.
- Do not throw out unused doses in the trash/garbage as they still may be stolen or accidentally taken by children or pets.
- Do not flush medications in the toilet or sink unless your doctor or pharmacist tells you specifically to do so.

