

[Click here for what you need to know about the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and over-the-counter medicines.](#)



Common Symptoms:

Select a symptom ▼

How to Safely Dispose Medicine

When was the last time you cleaned out your household supply of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines?

Just like the dosing instructions and additional information on the label, the expiration date on the packaging is there for a reason. Once a medicine has reached its expiration date, it may not provide the treatment that you need.

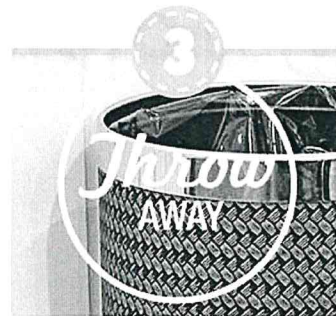
To ensure the medicines you take are both safe and effective, keep an eye on the expiration dates and safely dispose of any expired or unwanted medicines. According to research, most people fully realize proper disposal of medicines is important. However, one in five report they don't know safe disposal guidelines.

Fortunately, there are several convenient options to dispose of all OTCs, including in your home. Here's how to do it safely!

Option 1: In-home disposal: Follow these simple steps from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to dispose of OTCs in your household trash:

1. Mix medicines (do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds.
2. Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag.
3. Throw the container in your household trash.

Follow these steps to dispose of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines in your household trash:



Option 2: Local disposal programs: Many pharmacies and law enforcement agencies have disposal kiosks where consumers can dispose of unwanted, unused, or expired medicine – both OTC and prescription drugs – from their households.

For example:

Walgreens has more than 1,500 safe medication disposal kiosks at locations across 46 states and Washington, D.C. as part of its Safe Medication Disposal Program.

Rite Aid, through its KidCents Safe Medication Disposal Program, provides medicine disposal units to local law enforcement agencies across the country.

CVS's Medication Disposal for Safer Communities program provides disposal units to local law enforcement agencies, and disposal kiosks have been installed in more than 750 of their stores nationwide.

To find a safe medication disposal site near you, click here to access a kiosk site locator on MyOldMeds.com.

Option 3: Community take-back days: Take advantage of events that allow you to take expired or no longer wanted medicines to a specified location for safe disposal. For example, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) periodically hosts National Prescription Drug Take-Back events where collection sites are set up in communities nationwide for safe disposal. Visit the DEA's website for more information about National Drug Take-Back Day events. Law enforcement agencies may also sponsor medicine take-back programs in your community.

Questions about prescription medicines? For specific information on disposal of prescription drugs, including which ones should be flushed, go to the FDA's website.