

How to take, store, and get rid of opioids

The basics

Prescription opioid pain relievers (also called narcotics) are controlled substances. There are laws about who can prescribe them and how they should be used. It's important to know how to take opioids and how to store them safely.

Take opioid medications the right way.

Learn:

- How much to take
- What time of day (and how many times a day) is right
- What foods, drinks, or activities to avoid when taking opioids
- Whether to take the medication on an empty stomach, or with food

Prescription opioids often have a high “street value,” so someone might search your home for these drugs. Keep any opioids protected and out of sight.

Store opioids in places like:

- A locked cabinet, drawer, or safe
- A locked purse, bag, or suitcase

Do not store opioids in well-traveled areas like:

- The kitchen
- The bathroom (medicine cabinet)

Do not leave opioids out in the open:

- On a windowsill, table or nightstand, or in a purse

Get rid of any leftover opioids so that they don't harm others:

- Dissolve pills in water in a container or plastic bag. Add flour, coffee grounds, or kitty litter. Stir together, cover and throw away.
- **Don't** flush any medicine down the toilet unless the drug information sheet from the pharmacy says it's okay.

Keep in mind

Put prescription opioids in a locked, safe place so that no one else can find them. An opioid could hurt or kill someone else in the same amount of time (or less) that it takes to help you.



Did you know?

People who illegally take prescription opioids for “fun” get them most often from relatives or friends who have legal prescriptions.

Learn More

Register now at

www.painaction.com/actionstep

There, you'll find helpful information about:

- Medications & drug safety
- Pain issues
- Treatments
- Communicating with your health care provider