Safe Disposal of Prescription Medications

Of the 4 billion prescriptions filled in the United States every year, one-third of them go unused. That’s 200 million pounds of unused medications.¹

Unused medications should be disposed of as soon as possible to limit the possibility of illegal use.

Flushing or dumping down a drain is not the best way to dispose of medication. Sewage treatment systems can’t remove all the medications from the water released into lakes, rivers, or oceans in your area.²

So what are the other options?

Medication “Take-Back” Programs

“Take-back” programs allow the public to bring unused drugs to a central location for proper disposal. Call your local government’s trash and recycling service to see if a program is available.

In addition:
- The DEA allows you to mail back unused prescription medications to pharmacies and other authorized sites using packages made available at pharmacies and other locations.
- Most states have agency collection boxes overseen by law enforcement or pharmacies. Call the DEA’s Registration Call Center to find box locations or other disposal sites: 1–800–882–9539, or go to https://nabp.pharmacy/initiatives/awarex/drug-disposal-locator/ or https://www.deatakeback.com/
- Community coalitions and law enforcement in your area may sponsor “medication take-back events” periodically.

Disposal in Household Trash

If these programs are not available in your area, place the drugs in the trash by following these steps:
- Remove them from their original containers and conceal or remove any personal information, including the Rx number, from the container.
- Mix the medications with something inedible, such as coffee grounds or kitty litter.
- Place the empty container and the mixture in a sealed bag or empty can.


CARMEL
Carmel-by-the-Sea Police Department
No sharps or liquids, controlled substances OK
SE corner of Junipero and 4th Street
(831) 624-6403

CASTROVILLE
Castroville Branch Library
No controlled substances
11160 Speegle Street
(831) 769-8724

DEL REY OAKS
Del Rey Oaks Police Department
No sharps, controlled substances OK
650 Canyon Del Rey Blvd.
(831) 394-9333

MARINA
Monterey County Health Department Behavioral Health Marina Clinic
No sharps, no controlled substances
299 12th Street
(831) 755-4510

MRWMD
No controlled substances, OTC meds ONLY
14201 Del Monte Blvd.
(831) 384-5313

Marina Police Department
No sharps, no controlled substances
299 12th Street
(831) 755-4510

Walgreens Marina
No controlled substances
226 Reservation Road
(831) 384-4700

MONTEREY
Community Hospital Pharmacy
No sharps, controlled substances OK

(9 a.m.–6 p.m.)
23625 Holman Highway
(831) 624-5311

Community Hospital Front Lobby
Sharps OK (red bin), no controlled substances
(white bin)
23625 Holman Highway
(831) 624-5311

Monterey Police Department
No sharps, controlled substances OK
351 Madison Street
(831) 646-3830

PACIFIC GROVE
Central Avenue Pharmacy
No sharps, controlled substances OK
133 15th Street
(831) 373-1225

Pacific Grove Police Department
No sharps, controlled substances OK
580 Pine Avenue
(831) 648-3143

PEBBLE BEACH
Pebble Beach Community Service District
No controlled substances, sharps OK
3101 Forest Lake Road
(831) 373-1274

SEASIDE
Seaside Police Department Controlled substances OK
440 Harcourt Avenue
(831) 394-6811

Walgreens Seaside
No sharps, controlled substances OK
1055 Fremont Blvd.
(831) 393-9231

SALINAS
Alisal Pharmacy
Controlled substances OK, sharps OK
323 N. Sanborn Road
(831) 424-7321

AllCare Pharmacy
Controlled substances OK, sharps OK
331 Main Street
(831) 424-8053

Monterey County Health Department Behavioral Health
No sharps, no controlled substances
1441 Constitution Boulevard, Building 400, Suite 200
(831) 755-4510

CVS Pharmacy
No sharps, controlled substances OK
1140 S. Main Street
(831) 422-8511

Monterey County Health Department
No sharps, no controlled substances
1270 Natividad Road
(831) 621-5558

Star Pharmacy
No sharps, controlled substances OK
1273 S Main Street
(831) 755-4456

Sun Street Centers
No sharps, no controlled substances
8 Sun Street
(831) 753-5145

Valley Health Associates
No controlled substances, sharps OK
427 Pajaro Street, Suite 4
(831) 424-6655