



NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
NYS Education Department



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Help Protect New York's Waters

Don't Flush Unwanted Household Medications or Pour Them Down the Drain

Return to collection events where available

or

Mix with something undesirable such as coffee grounds, cat litter or dirt

Tape up containers

Toss in your garbage



For full instructions or designated collection events visit:

www.dontflushyourdrugs.net



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Safe Medication Disposal for Households

The best option is to take your medications to a nearby collection site.

Remember to keep all medications in a safe, secure place in your home out of reach of children and pets. It is best to properly dispose of medications (including controlled substances such as fentanyl, oxycodone, etc.) to ensure they will not be used in an unauthorized or accidental manner. Use one of the following methods to dispose of unwanted medications:

- Refer to our [NYS Medication Drop Box Locations](#) map to find collection sites near you. This comprehensive map includes drop boxes at pharmacies, New York State Police Headquarters, and other law enforcement agencies. New York State pharmacies and law enforcement agencies interested in adding a medication drop box collection site to the map should contact DEC at Rx.Takeback@dec.ny.gov. If you would like to return to the map at a later date, bookmark this page, not the map page.
- Some municipalities offer household pharmaceutical collections events in partnership with local law enforcement. Contact your municipality for more information. **Note: most municipal household hazardous waste collections do NOT accept pharmaceuticals.**
- The federal Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) [National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day](#) (link leaves DEC website) is held twice a year.
- Check with your local pharmacy to see if they sell or provide pre-addressed envelopes to mail unwanted medications for incineration.

As a last resort, follow the trash disposal instructions listed below:

- Mix medications (do not crush tablets or capsules) with water and then add salt, ashes, dirt, cat litter, coffee grounds, or another undesirable substance, to avoid accidental or intentional misuse of drugs. To prevent unintentional consumption by scavenging humans, pets, or wildlife, do not conceal discarded drugs in food.
- Hide all medications in an outer container, such as sealable bag, box or plastic tub to prevent discovery and removal from the trash. Seal the container with strong tape.
- Dispose of drugs as close to your trash collection day as possible to avoid misuse and/or misdirection.

Exceptions

- The federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends handling medications with care. Some drugs can cause harm, or even death, if used by someone other than the person for whom the medicine was prescribed. To prevent accidental ingestion of these potentially dangerous medicines, it is recommended that they be disposed of quickly through a medication take-back program or by transferring them to a DEA-authorized collector. If these disposal options are not readily available, these medicines may be flushed down the sink or toilet as soon as they are no longer needed. Visit the FDA's website for a [list of medicines that may be flushed](#) (leaves DEC website).



A portion of prescription and over-the-counter medications will not be used and if flushed or poured down the drain, can end up in our rivers and streams

- **Medications self-administered by injection with a needle or "sharp" may be disposed of in the trash.** However, DEC strongly recommends that medications with attached needles be disposed of at hospital-based household sharps collection programs. All hospitals in New York State (except for federal facilities) are required to collect sharps from households. [Additional collection programs](#) may be available in your area. If one of these options is not available to you, place syringes or IV's with an attached needle in a puncture proof container sealed with tape, labeled as "sharps" and deposit the container in the garbage outside of the home. Sharps may not be placed in collection receptacles or in mail-back packages.

Syringes without attached needles may be disposed of in household trash as described above.