

Take Action

Medication safety starts with you! We can all do our part to prevent the misuse of prescription drugs by engaging in safe medication practices at home, as well as educating others in our community.



At home

1 Only use prescription medications as directed by a healthcare professional.

- Follow the dosing instructions prescribed by your healthcare professional. These instructions are intentional and help to avoid negative effects.
- Talk with your pharmacist or prescriber if you feel your medication needs to be adjusted.

2 Do not share or take someone else's medication.

- Avoid tendencies to self-diagnose and self-prescribe. Many factors determine how we respond to medications—genetics, weight, and pre-existing medical conditions, among others. This can cause individuals to respond to the same medication differently.
- Regardless of intention, sharing or taking someone else's medication is not safe.

3 Keep your medications safe.

- Store medications in secure locations, such as lock-boxes, medication safes, or other lockable spaces. Avoid storage places such as drawers, nightstands, or kitchen cabinets that children and others can easily access.
- Follow any disposal instructions on the prescription label or patient information sheet. If none are given, dispose of unused medication by either:

1. Taking the medication to a drug drop box located in your community. Visit Rxdrugdropbox.org to find a location near you.

2. Taking the medication to a drug take-back event/program in your community. Contact your local law enforcement office or pharmacy for details.

3. Disposing of the medications at home.



Step 1: Remove pills from bottle and place in a bag that can be sealed. Mix the pills with undesirable substances such as kitty litter or coffee grounds.

Step 2: Throw away sealed mixture into the trash.

Step 3: Remove the prescription label and dispose of the empty bottle.

4 Model safe medication practices.

- Set a good example for your family and friends by modeling these safe medication practices.
- Research shows it makes a difference when parents discuss safe medication practices with their children on a regular basis. Think about it—would you only instruct your child once to look both directions before crossing the street? No! Treat these practices in a similar manner. Repeat the conversation often and discuss these practices when you or your child is prescribed a medication.
- Consult the **Take Action** section at GenerationRx.org for more tips on how to teach youth safe medication practices for life.

In your community

Ready to share what you have learned with others in your community?



We've created free, ready-to-use resources to educate people of all ages about safe medication practices.

Download these resources in the **Take Action** section at GenerationRx.org.



Learn more at GenerationRx.org

GenerationRx.org is an excellent resource to consult for more information related to prescription drug misuse. The following information can be found in the **Learn** section at GenerationRx.org, including links to additional websites related to these issues:

- Scope of the prescription drug misuse problem
- Drug storage and disposal guidelines
- Online courses or games

- List of signs and symptoms to facilitate recognizing misuse
- Resources to locate treatment centers for substance use disorders
- Steps for how to take action in a drug overdose situation
- Instructions for how to use and access Naloxone as a rescue agent in an opioid overdose



Additional information

1 Where can I learn about drugs that are commonly misused?

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) provides specific information on commonly misused drugs, including illicit street drugs, prescription medications, and alcohol: www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse

2 If I suspect a friend or family member is misusing prescription drugs, how should I intervene? What should I do?

Generation Rx focuses on educational strategies to prevent prescription drug misuse. To find intervention resources, we encourage you to consult one of the following resources:

- Partnership for Drug Free Kids: www.drugfree.org/resources/
- Mayo Clinic: www.mayoclinic.org (in the search engine type, *drug abuse intervention*)

3 Where can I find help for a prescription medication misuse problem or addiction?

If you think you or someone you know might have a problem, talk with your healthcare professionals. They may be able to guide you to medical specialists, treatment facilities, counselors, or medication-assisted treatment providers for help. The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration also provide a Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator for persons searching for facilities treating substance misuse and addiction problems. Visit www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov, or call the hotline at 1-800-662-HELP to find help near you.

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