

Pharmacies will take:

- Prescription medications (non-controlled)
- Antibiotics/Steroids
- Cold and flu medications
- Vitamins and herbal supplements
- Pet medications
- Medication samples
- Medicated ointments and lotions

Pharmacies will not take back medical supplies like needles and hydrogen peroxide, or personal care products like shampoos and lotions.

Law enforcement drop boxes will take:

- Prescribed controlled medicines (examples—Codeine, Xanax, Vicodin, OxyContin, Ritalin, etc.)
- Medicines that pharmacies can accept

Drop boxes are located at most West Michigan area police and sheriff departments.

Certain restrictions may apply at any of the drop off locations. Call the drop site you plan to use for more information on what items are accepted.

For a list of participating pharmacies and law enforcement drop boxes, go to www.wmtakebackmeds.org.

The West Michigan Take Back Meds Program is a joint effort between local pharmacies, law enforcement, wastewater treatment facilities, and government agencies to provide residents with safe, convenient access to proper medicine disposal.

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A Guide to Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicine Disposal

Proper Medicine Disposal

Why Should I Be Concerned?

Abuse is growing

The abuse of prescription drugs is a fast-growing problem, especially with teens and young adults. Because prescription drugs are legal, they are easy to get, often from home medicine cabinets. Many who misuse these drugs incorrectly think they are safer than illegal drugs.

As a teen, finding these drugs may be as simple as opening a medicine cabinet or purse at home, a friend's house or a relative's house.

Unwanted medicine placed in the trash can be stolen and used, possibly leading to illness and even death. It may also be swallowed by children or animals.

We live in this environment

Most unused drugs end up in landfills or the sewage system which is not safe for our environment. Medicines in our landfills can seep into the area groundwater. Medicines flushed down the toilet pass through our sewage treatment plants. They are then released into waterways. Many of these medicines may cause problems in humans and animals.



What Should I Do?

- Know that what you do with unwanted medicines can impact the environment and people around you.
- Store medicines in places that are out of sight and reach, or preferably locked.
- At least once a year, go through your household medicines to get rid of ones that are expired or unused.
- Dispose of medicines the right way.



How Do I Dispose of Medicines the Right Way?

West Michigan Take Back Meds Program offers free household medicine disposal at many pharmacies and law enforcement agencies. Follow these steps:

- Gather all unwanted household medicines.
- Leave them in their original containers but block out ALL personal information on the label. **Do not remove the name of the medication.**
- Find a collection site near you. Check online at www.wmtakebackmeds.org for a list of participating pharmacies or call your pharmacy. Police and sheriff departments have secure drop boxes, too.
- Bring medicines to the correct location.