IOWA POISON CONTROL CENTER

Poison HOTLINE

1-800-222-1222

October 2026



Did you know …

The US Department of Justice, along with the US Drug Enforcement Administration, sponsor the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day twice each year. Held in April and October of each year, these are additional opportunities for unused medications to be safely disposed of. Learn more here.

The next DEA Take Back Day is on **October 24, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** To find a nearby participating location, use this search tool.

Accepted items include prescription medications, patches, ointments, medication for pets, and over-the-counter (OTC) medications.

NOT accepted items include syringes, inhalers, and aerosols.

Safe Medication Disposal

Have you ever wondered what to do with old, unused, or expired medications? When medications are no longer needed, disposing of them properly can help prevent accidental ingestion, medication misuse or abuse, and potential harm to others. Follow a few simple steps to help keep your home safe:

- **Before Disposing of Prescription Medications:** Remove or scratch out personal information from prescription labels and medication packaging. This includes names, prescription numbers, and other identifying information.
- **Use a Drug Take-Back Program:** Drug take-back programs provide a safe and secure way to dispose of unused or expired medications. These programs may accept prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and, at participating locations, controlled substances. There are over 400 pharmacies and law enforcement locations in Iowa alone which have permanent collection boxes for safe, responsible disposal and are available year-round. To find one near you, use this convenient drop-off location search tool.
- **Check the Medication's Disposal Instructions:** If a drug take-back option is not available, check the medication's packaging or accompanying information for disposal instructions. You can also ask your pharmacist for guidance on how to safely dispose of a specific medication.

Unused medications don't need to remain in your home indefinitely. Regularly reviewing your medications and safely disposing of those that are expired or no longer needed can reduce the risk of accidental ingestion and medication misuse or abuse.

If you're unsure how to safely dispose of a medication, ask your pharmacist, locate a medication take-back program near you, or call the Iowa Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. Our Certified Specialists in Poison Information are available to answer your questions and provide guidance on safe medication disposal.

Kendra Duncan, RN, CSPI
Certified Specialist in Poison Information

POISON HELP 1-800-222-1222 POISONHELP.ORG

Hotline Editors: Dr. Dan McCabe, MD & Dr. Josh Trebach, MD
Please post and share this edition of **Poison Hotline** with your colleagues.
For questions/comments or to subscribe/unsubscribe from this distribution list, contact the IPCC Education and Outreach Manager at janna.day@unitypoint.org.
Read past issues of **Poison Hotline** at www.iowapoison.org.