



Take Back Campaign Talking Points

What?

- Take Back Your Meds is a statewide campaign to raise awareness about how and where to safely dispose of unwanted, unused or expired opioids — and the importance of removing prescription opioid medications from homes.
- Opioids are a type of pain medication that can be highly addictive. Examples are oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphine, and others.¹
- The illegal drug heroin is also an opioid.

Why?

Protect loved ones

- Opioids are now one of the leading causes of injury-related deaths in Washington State. More people die from overdose than from car crashes.²
- 75 percent of opioid misuse starts with people using medication that wasn't prescribed for them — usually taken from a friend or family member.³
- Between 2012 and 2016, more than 3,300 lives in Washington were lost to overdose from opioids.²
- Promptly removing leftover opioid prescriptions from your home and safely disposing of your meds at a take back program helps prevent misuse by a friend, family member or other home visitor and reduces the risk of deadly overdose.

Protect the environment

- Safe disposal not only helps prevent misuse and overdose deaths, it's also important for the health of our environment.
- Scientists have found medicines in Pacific Northwest water and soils.⁴ Even at low levels, these medicines can harm the health of wildlife and drinking water.
- Take back programs are the only environmentally safe way to dispose of opioid medications.

How/Where?

- There are two ways to safely dispose of opioids:
 - Drop them at a permanent take back location
 - Attend a National Prescription Drug Take Back Day in your community.
The next one is April 25. There will also be a Take Back event in October.
- Permanent drop boxes are conveniently located at retail pharmacies, police stations, health centers and other community sites.
- DEA National Prescription Drug Take Back Day events will be held on April 25, 2020, in communities across the state.
 - All prescription medications are accepted during Prescription Drug Take Back Day events.

Call to Action

- Go to TakeBackYourMeds.org to find:
 - A permanent drop box location near you
- Search by zip code or use an interactive map to find a take back location near you.

¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse

² Washington State Department of Health

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

⁴ Washington State Department of Ecology