

April 2018

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day April 28

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) Prescription Drug Take-Back Day is Saturday, April 28. This is a good opportunity to educate your patients that they may not need to continue taking opioids longer than their physical condition warrants.

While your patients have been educated to "finish all their meds," this doesn't always apply to opioids. The opioid epidemic has been fueled in part by the availability of legally prescribed medications being used for unintended purposes.

Patients may not realize the danger of giving friends or family members some of their own opioids, or having those medicines in their homes when people come to visit. Safely disposing of unused opioids is an easy but critical step we can all take to help reduce this epidemic.

Safe disposal methods

If patients do have unused medicines at home, let them know of these primary methods for safely disposing of them from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA):

- Find a local location for Prescription Drug Take Back Day [here](#). On days when that service is not active, patients can ask their pharmacists for a safe disposal location.
- Mix the uncrushed medications with used coffee grounds, kitty litter or soil; place that mixture in a sealed container such as a plastic bag; then throw it in the trash. Remind patients to black-out personal information from their medicine labels before throwing the containers away.
- If the above methods are not possible, flush unused medications.

More information from the FDA on disposing of unused medications is available [here](#).

Important reminder

This past October, we implemented preauthorization and supply limits for use of short-acting opioids for your opioid-naïve patients. We made the changes to ensure appropriate use of opioid analgesics for members suffering from chronic pain, and to protect both patients and their families from the risk of opioid abuse, misuse and diversion, while providing continued access to opioid medications when appropriate. [Learn more](#).