

# Safe Use and Disposal

## OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION



### Safety Tips

- Take your medication only as directed.
- Carefully note the time a medication was administered and consider writing it down.
- Do not cut pills in half or crush them to make them easier to swallow – unless directed by your OMS. This can change the way the medication is released into your system and have serious consequences.
- Never share your medication with someone else, as this is illegal.
- Do not take more than prescribed – even if pain relief is less than desirable – as this could result in side effects (including unintended overdose), especially when you are new to a medication. If less-than-adequate pain relief is obtained with the prescribed medication, contact your prescribing doctor.
- Store medication in a safe place only you can access:
  - In a locked drawer
  - On a high shelf
  - In a lock box or home safe
- Keep all medicines out of reach of children and pets.
- Keep medications in their original packaging until you are ready to take them.
- If you experience any adverse effects, get emergency help. Examples include:
  - Slow heartbeat
  - Trouble breathing or slow, shallow breathing
  - Severe sleepiness
  - Cold, clammy skin
  - Faintness
  - Dizziness
  - Rashes
  - Confused thinking
  - Trouble walking or talking normally
  - Seizure
  - Hallucinations
  - Unusual snoring



#### Parents and guardians

should administer medication to minors to ensure safety and avoid misuse. Remember, medications are safe and effective when used as directed and under the care of a professional.

### Proper Disposal Tips

Careful use and storage of your medications keeps everyone safe as does thoughtful and proper disposal of unused medicines.

#### MEDICINE TAKE-BACK PROGRAMS

Medicine “take-back” programs are a good way to dispose of expired, unwanted or unused medicines and reduce the chance someone else might take the medication:

- Visit [AAOMS.org](http://AAOMS.org) or the Drug Enforcement Administration’s website ([TakeBackDay.DEA.gov/](http://TakeBackDay.DEA.gov/)) for information about national Prescription Drug Take Back Day events.
- Contact your trash and recycling service to see if there is a medicine take-back program in your community. Learn about any special rules regarding which medicines can be taken back.
- Ask your pharmacist about medicine disposal programs in your area.



#### DISPOSAL IN HOUSEHOLD TRASH

- If no medicine take-back program is available in your area, follow these simple steps to dispose of most medicines in the household trash:
  - Mix medicines (do NOT crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance, such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds.
  - Place the mixture in a container, such as a sealed plastic bag.
  - Place the container in your household trash.
- Peel off or scratch out all information on the prescription label to make it unreadable before disposing of your empty pill bottle or other empty medicine packaging.

