

# Prescription Medication

## *Safe Storage & Disposal*



**Medications are powerful chemicals, and should be treated with care.** When safely stored, they pose less danger to curious children, are less likely to be stolen by risk-taking teens, are less likely to be a target for theft, and are less likely to be taken by mistake. If medicine is not stored properly, there can be serious consequences. The medicine may get into the wrong hands if a family member or visitor takes it without your knowledge. They may use it incorrectly to try to treat a medical condition – or worse, they may abuse it. Heat, humidity, or changes in temperature may also damage the medicine. If you have prescription medicine in your home, it is your responsibility to properly safeguard and dispose of it. Here are some general rules to follow.

### **The DO's and DON'Ts of Safe Medication Storage**

**DO** keep medicines in a Locked Box or a private cabinet your teen or their friends cannot easily access. Lock medicine in a cabinet or Lock Box if there is a risk for it being abused. Lock Boxes can be purchased for about \$20.

**DO** keep medicine in a cool, dry place that is **out of the reach** and **out of view** of children.

**DO** store medicine in its original container. The label on the bottle provides important information.

**DO** keep an updated list of all prescription medicine in your homes. Take an inventory at least twice a year – for example, when clocks 'spring forward' in spring and 'fall back' in autumn.

**DO** talk to your pharmacist about how to properly dispose of unused or unwanted medicine.

You can also access disposal information online at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) by searching for "Rx drug disposal."

**DON'T** leave medicine in places that are easily accessible to children or pets.

**DON'T** store medicine in a bathroom medicine cabinet where humidity and temperature changes can cause damage.

**DON'T** share prescription medicine. Healthcare professionals prescribe specific medicine for individuals based on personal medical histories and other health factors. A medicine that works for one person may cause harm – *even death* – to someone else, even if symptoms are similar.

**DON'T** take medicine in front of children who often mimic adults.

**DON'T** flush medicine down the toilet. Most medications dissolve in water and can wind up in our waterways. However, to protect water quality, flushing, burying or disposing of medications in the trash, is discouraged.

### **Getting rid of unused or unwanted prescription medication**

It is important to get rid of medicine that has expired or is no longer needed. There is no set rule for disposing of all medicine, so talk to your pharmacist about the best way to get rid of unused or unwanted medicine in your home.

For New Hampshire and Vermont, **Twin State Safe Meds** has an easy to navigate website [www.twinstatesafemeds.org/](http://www.twinstatesafemeds.org/). On their website, you can type your town in a search bar and see locations for safe disposal of prescription medications.