

# Medication Safety Toolkit

LEARN - LOCK - LEAD



## LEARN:

Proper medication storage and disposal are important for keeping individuals, families, and communities safe. When medications are not stored correctly or are left unused in the home, they can increase the risk of accidental poisoning, misuse, or abuse. Taking simple safety steps can help prevent these risks and protect everyone in the household.

Medications should always be stored in a secure location. Keeping medicines locked up and out of sight, especially away from children, teenagers, and pets, helps prevent accidental ingestion and misuse. Medications should be kept in their original containers with labels intact and safety caps closed, and returned to their storage location after each use. Extra care should be taken with prescription pain medications, which can be especially dangerous if used by someone other than the person prescribed.

Unused or expired medications should be disposed of as soon as they are no longer needed. The safest option is to use a local drug take-back program or collection site. If a take-back option is not available, medications can be mixed with an unappealing substance, sealed in a container, and placed in the trash. Personal information should always be removed from prescription labels. Proper disposal helps reduce the risk of accidental harm and medication misuse in the community.

## Legal Considerations:



Medication take-back programs are regulated to ensure medications are collected and disposed of safely. Many take-back events are organized or overseen by law enforcement, which is authorized to take custody of certain medications, especially controlled substances. Permanent medication drop boxes located at pharmacies or law enforcement facilities may also be used when they meet federal requirements.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) provides guidance on what items can be collected during take-back events. Most programs accept prescription and over-the-counter medications, including pills, patches, and liquids. However, items such as illegal drugs, needles, and hazardous materials are typically not accepted. Because rules may vary by location, it is important to check local guidelines before participating.

# LOCK: Storing Medication

Properly storing and disposing of medications is an important part of medication safety.

Medications that are not stored securely — especially in easy-to-reach places — can lead to accidental ingestion, poisoning, or intentional misuse.



## The CDC emphasizes these practices to help keep households safe:

- keeping medicines in their original containers with safety caps secured
- storing them up and away, out of the sight and reach of children and pets
- locking up controlled substances like pain medications to prevent unauthorized access
- Checking expiration dates and removing medicines that are no longer needed.

When it comes to disposal, getting rid of unused or expired medicines promptly reduces the chance that someone might take them by accident or on purpose. The CDC notes that timely disposal lowers the risk of accidental or intentional misuse. The DEA supports this by offering the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day and encouraging year-round disposal through authorized drop-off locations such as registered pharmacies, hospitals, and police departments. These programs give people a safe, anonymous way to dispose of unwanted medications and help reduce drug diversion and misuse in the community.

## Facts and Statistics:



- 12.7% of adults in the state of Kansas report non-medical use of prescription drugs or illicit drugs (excluding cannabis) in the past 12 months as of 2024.
- Over 97% of young adults in Kansas reported NOT misusing prescriptions in the past 30 days.
- Nearly 1 in 5 Kansas adults (roughly 29% are young adults) have a diagnosable substance use disorder.
- An estimated 56,000 individuals in Kansas aged 12 years or older had a pain reliever use disorder in 2022.

\*From the United Health Foundation 2025 Annual Report

DEA Medication Kiosk Locator - Scan this QR code to find a permanent medication drop box near you



Take Back Day Collection Site Locator - enter your zip code or county/city/state to see collection sites near you.



# LEAD: Resources Available



Lead others to practice medication safety through resources and education. There are many organizations and programs that provide guidance and support for safe medication disposal. Organizations like DCCCA can connect individuals with information on how to properly store and dispose of medications, while national organizations offer educational materials and community outreach programs. Sharing these resources with friends, family, and neighbors helps others access safe disposal options, encourages responsible medication management, and promotes overall community safety. By guiding others to trusted resources, anyone can play a role in preventing misuse and accidental ingestion.

Proper disposal of unused or expired medications doesn't have to be confusing, there are many tools and programs available to help you do it safely. DCCCA can provide guidance and materials for at-home medication disposal, including information about safe disposal products and how to use them.

Here are some useful options you may consider:

## At-home Disposal Resources:

These products are designed to safely deactivate medications so they can be thrown away with household trash:

- Deterra® – pouches that neutralize pills and liquid medications
- RX Destroyer® – packets for safely mixing medications into a gel
- Destroy Rx™ – disposal packets that deactivate medicines



## How to Host a Take Back Day:

Support your community by safely disposing of unused or expired medications. Do not handle medications yourself—work with law enforcement or provide attendees with at-home disposal tools like at-home disposal resources. Youth can help by distributing these resources and educating the community. DCCCA may be able to provide at-home disposal resources upon request. Please visit <https://www.dccca.org/program/safe-disposal/> to learn more about DCCCA's storage and disposal resources.



# Social Media Post Templates:

**TAKE BACK  
EVENT**

Do you have old or unused meds?  
Keep your family and community safe!  
Join us for a Medication Take-Back!

**JOIN US NOW!**

May 5, 2026 | 12 pm - 4 pm  
1739 E 23rd St., Lawrence KS

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
✉ [info@dcca.org](mailto:info@dcca.org) 🌐 [dcca.org](http://dcca.org)

Using social media to promote your events is an effective way to provide resources and opportunities for your community! Save these examples as templates for your own take back days!

## Upcoming Opportunity:

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day: Multiple locations across Kansas participate, with events typically on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## DEA National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
10:00am to 2:00pm

### Services Offered:

- A safe, free, anonymous way to dispose of unwanted or expired medication.
- Both human and animal medications!

### Find a Location Near You:



### More Information:

<https://www.dea.gov/takebackday>



# Resources for Medication Storage and Disposal:

## Resources to visit for more information:

### Center for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/medication-safety/about/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/medication-safety/materials/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/medication-safety/data-research/facts-stats/index.html>



### U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

<https://www.dea.gov/takebackday>

### Kansas Communities that Care (KCTC)

<https://kctcdata.org/>

### Food and Drug Administration

<https://www.fda.gov/drugs>

### Kansas Prevention Collaborative: It Matters

<https://kansaspreventioncollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/It-Matters-25-background-and-sources.pdf>

### United Health Foundation: America's Health Rankings

[https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/drug\\_use/drug\\_use\\_presc\\_opioids/KS](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/drug_use/drug_use_presc_opioids/KS)

### Additional Resources:

SUD hotline 866-645-8216

<https://www.ndtreatment.gov>

<https://www.DCCCA.org>

<https://www.samhsa.gov>

