



# What's in your medicine cabinet?

Unused or expired medications pose a health risk to you and your loved ones. Getting your medicine cabinet up to date should be part of your yearly spring cleaning.

Medication left lingering in your cabinet is problematic for several reasons:

- Expired medication can make you sick or fail to work as expected.
- Unused prescription drugs are some of the most commonly misused substances among teens.
- Unused medications are a potential poisoning concern for both children and pets.

In addition, identifying and properly disposing of unused or expired medications is a crucial way to prevent pollution from entering local water sources.



## GIVE YOUR MEDICINE CABINET A GOOD DECLUTTER

1. Remove everything from your medicine cabinet and gather any over-the-counter or prescription drugs from around the house.
2. Place any prescriptions that are up to date and in use back in the cabinet.
3. All other prescription medications should go in a pile for disposal.
4. Check the expiration date on all over-the-counter medications. Place any that are expired in the disposal pile.
5. Evaluate anything that is not expired to determine if it is needed. It should go in the disposal pile if it is unlikely to be used.
6. Organize any remaining medications by type in the medicine cabinet. Ensure all medicine in the cabinet is clearly labeled.
7. It's always important to store medication in a child and pet-proof location.



## HOW TO SAFELY DISPOSE OF MEDICATION

The best way to get rid of unused or expired medication is through a local take-back program. Contact your local city or county government and ask if they hold hazardous waste collection days or have a location to drop off medications for disposal.

You can also visit [disposemymeds.org](http://disposemymeds.org) to find a local pharmacy that allows you to drop off medication.

If you cannot find a place to take back your medication, follow these steps to dispose of it at home safely.

1. Empty all medication from its original container into a disposable container or ziplock bag.
2. Mix the medication with an undesirable substance such as kitty litter or coffee grounds, and seal it up.
3. Place the container in the trash.
4. Remove any identifying tags from empty medication bottles and place them in the trash or recycle bin.