

San Juan County Partnership has prepared this guidebook for parents and family members to address the misuse of prescription drugs by adolescents and teens.



In San Juan County, 5.8% of youth, grades 9–12, used prescription painkillers “to get high” in the last month

(Source: New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey, 2017).

Resources

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

National Association of Boards of Pharmacy
Foundation

National Institutions of Health, Safeguard My Meds

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH)

New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey (YRRS).

San Juan County Partnership (sjcpartnership.org)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration (SAMHSA)

The Medicine Abuse Project 2016 Report

U.S Food and Drug Administration’s FDA
Medication Disposal: Questions and Answers

Research has shown that taking precautions through safe storage and disposal of unwanted medications greatly reduces the risk of medications getting into the hands of teens.

One in three 12th graders (32.5 percent) said that prescription opioids were easily available.
Source: Monitoring the Future Survey (2018), National Institute on Drug Abuse.

In 2017, 5,455 youth ages 15–24 died from a drug-related overdose; over half of these were attributable to opioids.

*Source: The National Institute on Drug Abuse:
<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/drug-overdoses-youth>.*

About one-half (50.5%) of those who misused prescription pain relievers in the past year said that they obtained the prescription pain relievers they had most recently misused from a friend or relative.

Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs), 2013 and 2014).



What Can Parents Do?

- Learn about Opioids– which are what kids most often abuse. The following are examples of opioids:
Oxycodone (Oxycontin, Percodan, and Percocet),
Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, and Lorcet),
Methadone (Deolphine), and **Codeine**.
- Take the time to have open conversations with your children
- Recognize signs that your child might be abusing prescription medications, including:
 - ◆ Loss of interest in sports or school activities
 - ◆ Cash, valuables, or medication missing from the home
 - ◆ Sudden changes in mood or friends

In 86% of emergency room visits for medication poisoning, the medicine was left within reach of a child, such as in a purse, on a counter or dresser, or on the floor (Safe Kids Worldwide, 2013).

Be More Aware

- Set a good example for your children.
- Recognize that all medicines, including prescriptions and over the counter medicines, including vitamins, have risks along with benefits.
- Keep medication in a safe place and monitor.
- Dispose of old or unused medications properly.
- Sharing is NOT caring.

Properly Dispose of & Store Medication

Many people hold on to prescription medications even after they have expired or are no longer needed. Different drugs need to be disposed of in different ways. Read label to see if the prescription is safe to flush.

Drug “take back” programs are offered by:

Law Enforcement

Pharmacies

Government Agencies

Community Organizations

Regularly Scheduled Drug “Take Back” Events (Dates, times and locations are advertised before each event).

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(Source: *New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey, 2017*).

DO NOT leave medicine in places that are easily accessible to children or pets.

DO NOT store medicine in a bathroom medicine cabinet where humidity and temperature changes can cause damage.

DO NOT 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.

In 2017 in the USA there were 17,029 overdose deaths involving prescription opioids, an average of 47 a day.

(*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER*).

Do's & Don'ts for Safe Storage of Medications

DO ask your pharmacist if any of the medicine you have been prescribed may have the potential for abuse.

DO lock up all prescription medicine in a cabinet, drawer, or medicine safe.

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

DO store medicine in its original container — the label on the bottle provides important information about the medicine.

DO keep an updated list of all prescription medicine in your home. Take an inventory at least twice a year (See inventory log on back cover).

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

DO consider asking your doctor for a prescription of Naloxone with any prescription painkiller. Naloxone is a safe “rescue drug” that reverses the effects of opioids, including prescription painkillers. More information at <http://www.doseofrealitynm.com>

Take Back Locations

Farmington Police Department

Aztec Police Department

Bloomfield Police Department

San Juan County Sheriff's Office & Substations
in Kirtland & Lee Acres

Northern Navajo Medical Center

Walgreen's (20th Street Location)

If you are not able to access a “take back” location, follow the U.S Food and Drug Administration guidelines for home disposal, in summary:

- Remove and destroy all personal information from drug containers.
- **DO NOT** flush the drugs down the toilet, unless the prescription bottle has a “safe to flush” sticker.
- Place medication in a container with a lid or in a Ziploc bag.
- Mix all unused drugs with coffee grounds, kitty litter or spoiled food.
- Place in the trash the same day the trash is collected.

Environmental Problems



(EPA).

If not disposed of or stored properly, medications can be stolen or resold by family members and friends. This is particularly relevant to teenagers.

In homes that use septic tanks, prescription and over the counter drugs flushed down the toilet can leach into the ground and seep into ground water (EPA 2009).

In cities and towns where residences are connected to wastewater treatment plants, prescription and over the counter drugs poured down the sink or flushed down the toilet **can pass through the treatment system** and enter rivers and lakes that may flow downstream, to serve as sources for community drinking water supplies. Water treatment plants are generally not equipped to routinely remove medicines (EPA 2009).

Medication **residues leach into water systems**, posing serious threats to wildlife. Traces of hormones, antibiotics, anti-depressants, tranquilizers, beta-blockers, and other chemicals derived from prescription medications are found in our water and have been linked to development problems in fish and frogs. According to the Associated Press Series, antibiotics, anti-convulsants, mood stabilizers and hormones **have been found in the drinking supply** of 46 million Americans and have been detected in the drinking water of 24 major metropolitan areas (Disposal of Unwanted Medicines: A Resource for Action in Your Community, 2019).