

Medication & Prescription Drug Disposal

Medicine and prescription drugs play a critical role in our lives, but unfortunately, many consumers are unfamiliar with the proper way to discard leftover or old prescriptions. Medications and prescription drugs should not be put in the trash, recycling, or compost bin, nor flushed or poured down the drain.

Improper disposal can have significant negative impacts on the environment and our communities:

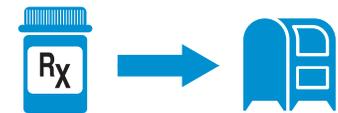
- Not all the ingredients in prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicines are removed during wastewater treatment and pose a risk to aquatic life once they enter the watershed.
- Accidental poisoning of pets or children can occur if medications are left accessible instead of being disposed of safely.
- Improper drug disposal increases the risk of theft and abuse of drugs.

Fortunately, a multitude of safe disposal options are available:

- Over 70 local pharmacies, hospitals, and law enforcement sites across Alameda County offer free drop-off bins, and many sites accept controlled substances alongside medications. Search our [RE:Source guide](#) to find a location near you, or visit [Don't Rush to Flush](#), a program developed by the California Product Stewardship Council.
- Prescription medications and controlled substances are not accepted at our Oakland, Livermore, and Hayward Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facilities.
- Needles, syringes, lancets, and other sharps are accepted at self-serve kiosks often located next to the medication collection kiosks at pharmacies across the state, but must be packaged in [approved sharps containers](#) made with puncture and leak-resistant plastic. The HHW Facilities also accept sharps in the appropriate containers.
- The MED-Project will send a free, prepaid, mail-back envelope to your home. Call Med-Project at 1-844-633-7765 or [submit a request online](#).
- The RE:Source guide also lists vendors that accept [donations of empty plastic pill bottles](#) for reuse.



Leftover or old medications should never be tossed in a bin or flushed down the toilet or sink.

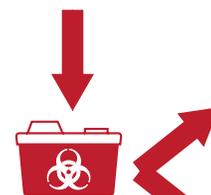


Prescription & over-the-counter medications

Self-serve collection kiosk



Syringes & auto injectors



In sharps container, up to 1 gallon in size



Self-serve sharps kiosk



Drop off at HHW Facility



Visit [StopWaste.org/medications](https://www.StopWaste.org/medications) for additional details on the proper disposal of medications and sharps, or visit the [RE:Source guide](#) for nearby locations for the safe disposal of medications and sharps.