

Safe Disposal of Pet Medications

Keeping unused or expired veterinary medications can be dangerous—accidental ingestion may cause illness, toxicity, or even death. Proper disposal protects pets, people, and the environment. Contact your veterinary team with any questions.

Drug Take-Back Programs (best and safest option)

This U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) website has a list of year-round collection sites (e.g., pharmacies, hospitals, law enforcement facilities) that you can search to find one near you. It also promotes “National Take Back Day” events every April and October.

Visit dea.gov/takebackday or call the DEA information line at 1-800-882-9539

FDA “Flush List” Medications

If take-back options are not available, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends flushing these high-risk medications:

- Buprenorphine for its high risk of accidental ingestion or misuse.
- Fentanyl since it is an extremely potent opioid and dangerous even in small amounts.
- Hydrocodone for its risk of abuse and severe toxicity.
- Morphine for its risk of abuse and severe toxicity.
- Oxycodone since it is a commonly abused opioid and dangerous if ingested.
- Diazepam for its high risk of accidental ingestion and misuse.

Other Safe Disposal Options

Prepaid Drug Mail-Back Envelopes: Available online or at select pharmacies; allow direct shipment to approved disposal facilities.

DisposeRx Packets: When mixed with water and medications, these packets form a disposable gel that can be placed in household trash. These can be requested at most pharmacies.

Household Items (If No Other Option): Mix medications with used coffee grounds or cat litter, seal the mixture in a sturdy container, and place it in household trash.

Client handout prepared by Denise Colbrook, pharmacy student, University of Illinois-Chicago, February 2026