



Prescription drug disposal in Ohio

The 2011 **Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP)** estimates that more than 1.7 million Ohio adults have friends or family members who have experienced problems as a result of abusing prescription pain relievers such as oxycontin, vicodin, percocet

or codeine. About four Ohioans die each day because of accidental drug overdoses. Yet, many Ohioans don't know that keeping unused prescription drugs in their medicine cabinets raises the risk of misuse and abuse of those drugs. In addition,

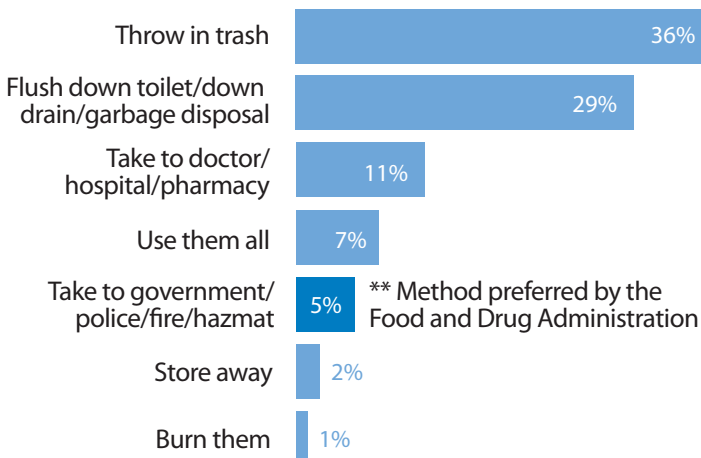
many Ohioans are not disposing of their drugs properly.

To understand what happens to unused and expired prescription drugs, OHIP asked about prescription drug disposal methods in Ohio.

Most Ohio adults dispose of prescription drugs in unsafe ways

More than 6 in 10 Ohio adults (65%) dispose of prescription drugs by throwing them away or flushing them down the drainage system. This is a public safety and public health issue. Chemicals from wastewater find their way into the water supply. These chemicals can harm people and wildlife.

How do you typically dispose of unused or expired prescription medications?*



* Does not add to 100% because the responses "other," "do not use medications" and "don't know" were not included

Take-back program the safest disposal method

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends the use of medicine take-back programs as the safest way to remove expired, unwanted, or unused medicines from the home and to reduce the chance of accidental poisonings and overdoses.

The United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) launched the first National Prescription Drug Take Back Day in September 2010. The events are held twice a year, in fall and spring. The next National Prescription Drug Take Back Day will be held Oct. 29, 2011. This service is free and anonymous.

To find a "take-back" location near you, visit the DEA website at <http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug-disposal/takeback/index.html>.

If you miss the Oct. 29 take-back day, you can return your unused or expired prescription drugs to a pharmacy, which will dispose of them in the safest manner possible for a small charge.

These findings unless otherwise noted are from The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati's Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP) conducted July 15-25, 2011, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 946 adults throughout Ohio was interviewed by telephone. This included 742 landline interviews and 204 cell phone interviews. In 95 of 100 cases, statewide estimates will be accurate to $\pm 3.2\%$. There are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias.

For more information about OHIP, please visit www.healthfoundation.org/ohip.html