



# The Opioid Checklist

## Medication Guidelines for Patient Safety

Your healthcare provider has prescribed an opioid pain medication for you. This is an important medication that can help relieve your pain, but it is classified as a “controlled substance” by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration because it carries a risk for misuse and dependency. As your pharmacist, I want to help you use this medication safely so that you get the benefit of the pain relief you need but avoid the potentially devastating consequences of its misuse.

- ✓ *Prescription medications like the one you are receiving are among the most misused substances in the U.S.*
- ✓ *This medication can lead to dependency or addiction, particularly if used differently than your prescriber intended*
- ✓ *This medication is chemically similar to heroin, and most heroin users first misused an opioid pain medication*
- ✓ *Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidentally death in our country, and opioid pain medications contribute significantly to these deaths*



**Here are some steps you can take to minimize the potentially tragic consequences of the misuse of this medication for yourself and the people around you:**

- ❑ **Only use this medication as directed by your healthcare provider.** *When you use someone else’s medications or use your own prescription drugs differently than directed by the prescriber, the risk for dependency, addiction, or overdose is enhanced.*
- ❑ **Never share your medication with others or take someone else’s prescription medications.** *It is illegal and potentially harmful to give or sell this medication to others.*
- ❑ **Medication should be stored in a secure or lockable location** *where others cannot get to it, because most people who misuse prescription drugs get them (sometimes steal them) from relatives or friends.*
- ❑ **Do not take this medication with other drugs or alcohol unless advised to do so by your healthcare provider.**
- ❑ **You may wish to keep naloxone on hand in case you, or someone around you, experience an opioid overdose.** *Accidental deaths in the U.S. due to opioid drug overdoses are a serious public health problem and are usually due to depressed breathing caused by the drugs. This risk can be increased by taking this medication with alcohol or other drugs which also depress breathing. Be aware that there is a very effective antidote for these overdoses – a medication called naloxone – which may be available from your pharmacist without a prescription.*
- ❑ **If you do not use all of this medication, it should be properly disposed of** *by placing it in a community drug dropbox; participating in a community drug take-back event; or removing the medication from its container and disposing of it via the U.S. Food and Drug Administration ([fda.gov](http://fda.gov)) guidelines.*
- ❑ **Let your prescriber or pharmacist know if you have questions about the safe use of your medications.**



Most people who misuse prescription drugs get them from family members or friends, so it is very important to store them in secure locations and properly dispose of them when no longer needed.

## Here are some options for safe drug disposal:

1

Place them in a drug dropbox.



Visit [rxdrugdropbox.org](http://rxdrugdropbox.org) to find locations in your area.

2

Take advantage of community drug take-back programs that allow the public to bring unused medications to a central location for proper disposal.



Ask your pharmacist or local health department about drug take-back events or visit [https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/](https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/)

3

No dropbox or take-back program near you? Dispose of medications safely at home by:



**STEP 1**

Remove pills from bottle and mix them with undesirable substances such as kitty litter or coffee grounds.



**STEP 2**

Throw away the sealed mixture into the trash.



**STEP 3**

Remove the prescription label and dispose of the empty bottle.

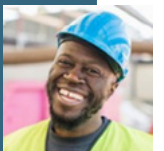
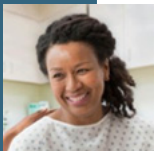
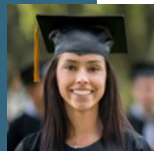
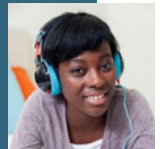
This information is provided by your pharmacists at:

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**GenerationRx**  
Safe medication practices for life.

The mission of Generation Rx is to educate the public about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications. In doing so, we strive to enhance medication safety among our youth, college students, other adults in our communities, and seniors. Free educational resources are provided for people of all ages.

Since 2009, the College of Pharmacy at The Ohio State University and the Cardinal Health Foundation have partnered to provide open source educational materials that anyone can use to help prevent the misuse of prescription drugs. These ready-to-use resources are designed to provide everything needed to make a presentation or offer a program in your community, school or college.



To learn more, visit  
**GenerationRx.org**