



# MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

Every physician matters, each patient counts.

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## Medication Storage

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# smart and safe

Information about Opioid Medications  
for Patients, Prescribers and Policymakers



Most people who abuse prescription drugs get them from friends and family. You can play a big role in keeping powerful medicines out of the hands of those shouldn't have them.

Make sure the people in your life don't have access to your medicine by following these steps.

### Step 1: Monitor

Start by taking note of how many pills are in each of your prescription bottles or pill packets.

Keep track of your refills. This goes for your own medicine, as well as for other members of the household. If you find you need to refill your medicine more often than expected, that could indicate a problem.

If your teen has been prescribed a medicine, be sure you control the medicine, and monitor dosages and refills. You need to be especially vigilant with medicine that are known to be addictive and commonly abused by teens.

Make sure your friends and relatives — especially grandparents — are also aware of the risks. Encourage them to regularly monitor their own medicines.

If there are other households your teen has access to, talk to those families as well about the importance of monitoring and safeguarding their medications.

## Step 2: Secure

Approach securing your prescriptions the same way you would other valuables in your home, like jewelry or cash. There's no shame in helping protect those items and the same holds true for your medicine.

Take prescription medicine out of the medicine cabinet and secure them in a place only you know about.

If possible, keep all medicines, both prescription and over-the-counter, in a safe place, such as a locked cabinet.

Tell relatives, especially grandparents, to lock their medicine or keep them in a safe place.

Talk to the parents of your teenager's friends. Encourage them to secure their prescriptions as well.

## Step 3: Dispose

Take an inventory of all of the medicine in your home. Discard expired or unused medicine – both prescriptions and over the counter medicines.

Some people will try to retrieve discarded prescription medicine from the trash. To help prevent this from happening, mix the medicine with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter. Put the mixture into an empty can or bag and discard.

Unless the directions on the packaging say otherwise, do not flush medicine down the drain or toilet.

Remove any personal, identifiable information from prescription bottles or pill packages before you throw them away. This protects your family's privacy, and prevents unauthorized refills.

Learn more about safeguarding and disposing of medicine here.



## Questions?

Contact us at [SmartScriptsMA@mms.org](mailto:SmartScriptsMA@mms.org)