

Medication Safety for Older Adults



Store medications safely

Most people who misuse prescription drugs get them from family or friends. It is your responsibility to protect your medications from theft and misuse by others. In addition, some medicines can become less effective or take on unwanted effects if not stored correctly.

- Store medications in cool, dry and secure locations, such as lockboxes, medication safes, lockable drawers or other lockable spaces away from heat, moisture or humidity. Heat, air, light and moisture may damage your medications or make it less potent. (The medicine cabinet in your bathroom is one of the worst places to store your medicines.)
- Avoid storage places that children or others can easily access, such as drawers, nightstands or kitchen counters or cabinets - even if you rarely have visitors or children in your home.
- Keep your medications in their original containers. If you use pill organizers to manage your medications, put only the medicines you need for a reasonable time in the organizers and keep the rest in the original containers.
- Do not store other items in your medication containers. This includes the cotton packing that comes with many new bottles of medicine; remove and discard it upon opening for the first time.
- Dispose of unused or expired medications promptly and properly.
- Review your full list of medications with your pharmacist and ask if any of them have specific storage instructions.