

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions for Iowans about *TakeAway*TM

What is the *TakeAway* program?

The *TakeAway* program allows Iowans to properly dispose of unused and expired medications at community pharmacies.

What medications can I bring to the *TakeAway* program?

Any pharmaceutical product, both prescription and over-the-counter medications, can be taken to a *TakeAway* pharmacy for proper disposal EXCEPT controlled substances. Only MEDICATION is acceptable – you may not dispose of sharps, test strips, rubbing alcohol, gauze, or any other items in your medicine cabinet unless they are prescription or over-the-counter medicines. Creams, ointments, and liquids are acceptable if they are less than 4 oz.

Why should I take my unused medications to a *TakeAway* pharmacy?

Unused medications should be disposed of properly to avoid a number of complications. Some possible risks of improper disposal include environmental and water contamination, accidental ingestion by children or pets, and drug diversion. In addition, it is always good practice to dispose of unused or expired medications to avoid confusion and possible drug interactions with current medications.

Does the medication need to be in its original container?

Although it is not REQUIRED, it is preferred that medications are returned in prescription vials. Containers with liquid contents should be enclosed in a plastic bag.

Can I donate my unused medications to somebody else that can use them?

Once a medicine is dispensed to a patient, it is illegal for a pharmacy to accept the medication back to dispense to others. Some medicines in unit dose packaging (one pill per package from the manufacturer) may qualify for the Iowa Prescription Drug Repository. www.iowapdc.org

Can I bring in my syringes or diabetic testing supplies?

No. Only medications can be accepted back to the program. The disposal process does not allow for needles or other supplies to be accepted.

What happens to my medicines after they go in the *TakeAway* system?

When a *TakeAway* system or envelop is filled, it is sealed and shipped to Sharps Compliance, Inc which owns and operates an assured destruction facility. The *TakeAway* system in its entirety is incinerated by a waste-to-energy process. Law enforcement witnesses the destruction.

Is the *TakeAway* program free?

Proper disposal of pharmaceutical waste is not free. Iowa's *TakeAway* program was initially funded by the 2009 state legislature through a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant. Through this grant pharmacies receive *TakeAway* systems at no charge and patients can return unused medications free of charge. At the launch of the program (October 2009) it is not yet determined how sustainable funding will be achieved.