

# ***BETter Living ...***

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## **Do You Have Prescription Medications?**

Many people require medications to survive and help them with health conditions. Are you keeping them in a safe location and out of the reach of others? The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) observes National Prevention Week to increase knowledge of substance use and promote the importance of Mental Health.

16.8 % of high school students have taken a prescription medication that was not prescribed for them at least once in their lifetime. Prescription drugs are the most commonly misused substance by teens after marijuana and alcohol. The most commonly misused prescription drugs include: opioids, depressants, and stimulants. Opioids relieve pain, while depressants slow brain activity to help someone reduce their anxiety or to help someone sleep. Stimulants increase attention and alertness and treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

To reduce the chance of someone misusing your prescription medications, follow these tips on safe storage:

- Choose a location that cannot be reached and is out of sight of children and visitors.
- Store medications in a lock box or a locked medicine cabinet.
- Remove them from countertops, nightstands, or other locations that others can access.
- Return medications to the out of sight location after every use.
- While traveling or at work, use a locking travel medication case.

Do you have extra prescription drugs that you no longer need setting on shelves in your house? Many times you will need a medication for a short time and then you have extra left. It is very important to dispose of the medication safely, especially opioids.

There are bags that you can use to properly dispose of your medicine. Deterra bags deactivate the drug, so it will be undesirable and they are free and available at the Wabaunsee County Health Department. There are different sizes available dependent on the amount of medication that you will need to dispose of. Also, twice per year the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) holds drug take back days, where you can drop off medications at different authorized locations.

Spring is a great time to clean and remove anything that you do not need, so I encourage you to properly dispose of any unused medications and keep the medications that you need out of sight and out of reach of other people.

For more information, visit: [dea.gov](http://dea.gov), [samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov), call 785-765-3821 or email: [btrieb@ksu.edu](mailto:btrieb@ksu.edu).