

Recommendations for Medication Storage

Medications can be an important part of any treatment but also come with serious risks. Prescription opioids in particular are used to treat moderate or severe pain following injury, surgery, or for other health conditions. To avoid accidental or illegal use of prescriptions by others, it is critical that you properly store medication in areas least likely to be found or accessible by children, family members, and guests.

Commonly Abused Prescription Medications:

- **Pain Medications** prescribed for people with serious, long-term pain, and sometimes short term pain: Vicodin®, OxyContin®, Percocet®, and codeine
- **Stimulants** used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or other disorders: Ritalin®, Concerta®, Adderall®, Dexedrine®, and Meridia®
- **Sedatives, Tranquilizers, and Barbituates** prescribed to treat stress, anxiety, panic attack, insomnia and seizures: Valium®, Xanax®, Ativan®, Klonopin®, Ambien®, Lunesta®

Keeping others Safe:

It is important to store your medication in a place that is not likely to be found by children, family members, and guests.

- Keep your prescriptions in a secure location to make sure kids, family, and guests don't have access to them, preferably in a locked box which you can purchase at your local pharmacy.
- Know where your prescription medications are at all times.
- Keep prescription medications in the original bottle with the label attached and the child-resistant cap secured.
- Keep track of how many prescription pain pills are in your bottle so you are immediately aware if any are missing.

Additional Best Practices for Proper Storage:

- Don't leave the cotton plug in a medicine bottle.
- Check the expiration date each time you take a drug
- Never use a medication that has changed color, texture, or odor, even if it has not expired. Safely dispose of capsules or tablets that stick together, are harder or softer than normal, or are cracked or chipped.
- Ask your pharmacist about any specific storage instructions for your medications.

Why this information is important:

According to recent statistics, approximately 71% of obtained prescription drugs are gifted, purchased, or stolen from friends and relatives. In fact, survey results from 2010-2011 suggest that 6.1 million people have used prescription drugs for non-medical purposes in a given month. Proper storage and keeping commonly abused medications out of reach of children, family members, and guests can prevent others from illegally or accidentally taking your medications and prevent harmful risks such as overdose or death.