

## SAFE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Prescription drug abuse is a serious public safety concern. The Montana Division of Criminal Investigation reports that 42 percent of the drug cases it handled in 2009 involved prescription drug abuse.

Do your part to keep prescription drugs from being stolen or diverted to illegal uses.

### Safely Store Prescription Drugs

Keep prescription drugs locked, if possible, and out of the reach of children. Maintain a medications log to track the number of pills you have and regularly check that none are missing. Be mindful of guests and strangers who enter your home, and keep medications and bottles out of sight.

### Disposal

Look for a drug take-back event in your community or follow these steps for home disposal:

1. Take your prescription drugs out of their original containers.
2. Mix drugs with an undesirable substance, such as cat litter or used coffee grounds.
3. Put the mixture into a disposable container with a lid, such as an empty margarine tub, or into a sealable bag.
4. Conceal or remove any personal information, including the prescription number, on the empty containers by covering it with black permanent marker or duct tape, or by scratching it off.
5. Place the sealed container with the mixture and the empty drug containers in the trash.

**63 percent of teens say that prescription drugs are easy to get from their parents' medicine cabinet.**

## EDUCATION RESOURCES

### Montana Department of Justice

[invisibleepidemic.com](http://invisibleepidemic.com)

### The Anti-Drug

[theantidrug.com](http://theantidrug.com)

### Partnership For a Drug-Free America

[drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org)

### National Institute on Drug Abuse

[drugabuse.gov](http://drugabuse.gov)

### Office of National Drug Control Policy

[WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov](http://WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov)

### National Institute on Drug Abuse – For Teens

[teens.drugabuse.gov](http://teens.drugabuse.gov)

### Above the Influence – For Teens

[freevibe.com](http://freevibe.com)

### Time to Talk

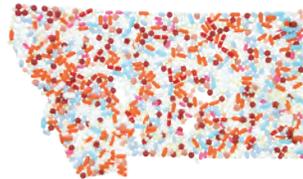
[timetotalk.org](http://timetotalk.org)

### Montana Department of Justice

Attorney General Steve Bullock  
P.O. Box 201401  
Helena, MT 59620-1401

Phone: 406-444-2026  
Fax: 406-444-3549  
E-mail: [ssmillie@mt.gov](mailto:ssmillie@mt.gov)

*1000 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$1.71 per copy, for a total cost of \$1,714, which includes production and printing. There was no cost for distribution.*



[invisibleepidemic.com](http://invisibleepidemic.com)

invisibleepidemic





**A MESSAGE FROM MONTANA ATTORNEY GENERAL STEVE BULLOCK**

Prescription drugs play an important role in health care. They save lives and help manage pain and disease. However, when used inappropriately, they can be deadly.

On average, meth, heroin and cocaine contribute to the deaths of 20 Montanans each year. Prescription drug abuse is a contributing factor in the deaths of more than 300 Montanans each year.

Many people believe that, because doctors prescribe them, prescription drugs are a safer alternative to illegal street drugs. More than half of teens don't realize that it's against the law to misuse prescription drugs.

Prescription medications are often obtained from the medicine cabinets of family and friends.

Parents, please talk with your children about the dangers of prescription drug abuse. Learn more by visiting [invisibleepidemic.com](http://invisibleepidemic.com).

Let's work together to ensure that prescription medications are used as they are supposed to be and only by the person they are prescribed for. Prescription drugs should save lives, not end them.

Steve Bullock  
Montana Attorney General

**TIPS FOR PARENTS TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS**

**Talk with your teens** about the risks of prescription drug abuse and misuse.

**Establish rules** including using medicines only as directed and not sharing prescriptions.

**Be a good role model.** Follow the same rules with your own prescriptions.

**Safeguard and monitor** quantities of all your drugs at home.

**Properly dispose of old or unused medicines.** Ask your doctor or pharmacist about the best way to get rid of each drug or visit [invisibleepidemic.com](http://invisibleepidemic.com) for tips.

**Remind friends and family** to safeguard their medications.

**Montana teens have the third highest rate of prescription pain reliever abuse in the nation.**

*"An injury that required my daughter to have surgery catapulted her into massive prescription and non-prescription drug use: OxyContin, Fentanyl patches, methamphetamines, alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, etc. She was getting them anywhere she could. Stealing them, buying them on the street, over the Internet and doctor shopping."*

*-from a mother in the Flathead*

**PRESCRIPTION DRUGS SHOULD SAVE LIVES, NOT END THEM**

Prescription drug abuse includes taking these medications for a non-medical purpose, such as taking a pain medication to get high, or using prescription drugs that were illegally purchased on the street.

Misuse refers to an intentional overdose, injecting non-injectable drugs, mixing medications or increasing doses without consulting a doctor. It also means sharing medications.

The most abused and misused drugs in Montana are:

**Hydrocodone:** Vicodin and Lortab contain hydrocodone, the most frequently prescribed opiate in the U.S.

**Oxycodone:** OxyContin ("oxy"), Percodan and Percocet ("percs") contain oxycodone and are popular among teens.

**Methadone:** Often used to treat addiction to heroin, it carries its own potential for abuse and misuse.

**Fentanyl:** A pain reliever 100 times more potent than morphine. Its most common form is a patch generally used in hospitals, nursing homes and hospice care.

**One in five teens has abused prescription drugs.**

