

Prescription abuse is on the *rise*

Recently deceased individuals may have unused or old medications in their home, leaving their loved ones vulnerable to accidental poisonings, theft, or unsafe nonmedical use by friends and relatives.

As a funeral professional, you have a unique opportunity to provide important information to those you serve about the security and safe disposal of the recently deceased's prescription drugs during the funeral planning process. When discussing safety of valuables during your initial meetings, consider providing information about these three steps to prevent prescription drug abuse:



Lock

Keep medication out of sight and in a safe and secure place.

- ✓ Discuss securing medications as soon as possible until the family is able to properly dispose of them.
- ✓ Encourage storing medications in a lock box or hiding them in a discrete location so they are not easy for others to find.
- ✓ Promote discretion. There's no reason to tell people about the medicines the loved one was taking.



Monitor

Keep track of medication

- ✓ Encourage the family to periodically take inventory of the unused medications until they can be properly disposed.
- ✓ Discuss the consequences of sharing medications. If a family member or friend is injured, instead of "sharing" a pain reliever, make sure he or she sees a health care professional



Take Back

Drop off unused medication at local Take Back locations

- ✓ Encourage the family to utilize a local prescription drug Take Back location. Refer families to takeback.nd.gov to find Take Back locations near them.
- ✓ If a local Take Back location is not an option, encourage safe disposal by placing the medications in an unmarked opaque container mixed with coffee grounds or cat litter in the garbage.

STAY INFORMED AND AWARE OF COMMON SIGNS OF ABUSE, SIGNS OF OVERDOSE, AND
WAYS TO RESPOND. YOU PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN KEEPING YOUR COMMUNITY SAFE.

OPIOIDS

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[BEHAVIORALHEALTH.ND.GOV/OPIOIDS](https://behavioralhealth.nd.gov/opioids)

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