

## **Lock Up Your Meds**

*Protect loved ones from opioid misuse*

Whether you realize it or not, the pain reliever medications sitting on your shelf or countertop could be putting your family and friends at risk of opioid misuse. Nearly half of people misusing pain relievers, including prescription opioids, get them from a friend or family member.

Many of today's household medicine cabinets contain prescription opioid medications. Legal prescription opioids commonly prescribed by doctors to reduce pain after surgery or injury include oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine and morphine.

While opioid pain medications are generally safe when taken for a short time and as prescribed by a doctor, they can be highly addictive. Opioids can negatively affect the reward center in the brain, causing users to need more and more over time.

One simple step — such as locking up medications — could help stop your prescription opioid pills from being misused by a family member or home visitor.

Protect your loved ones and lock up the opioids in a safe, locked cabinet, medicine lockbox or other secure container. Be sure to keep pills in the original packaging to prevent confusion with other medications. And, finally, never share your prescription medication with others.

When you're no longer taking the medication, promptly remove unused opioid prescriptions from your home and safely dispose of the leftover pills at a take-back location or send them back using a free mail-back envelope. Find a take-back location near you or order a free mail-back envelope at [MedTakeBackWashington.org](http://MedTakeBackWashington.org).

Lock up your medications to help protect your loved ones from opioid misuse. Visit [GetTheFactsRx.com](http://GetTheFactsRx.com) for more information.