

How Can I Help Prevent Drug Abuse In My Community?

The United States is facing a prescription drug opioid and heroin epidemic. In Washington, nearly 1,000 people die from opioid or heroin overdoses each year. Many more experience addiction, dependence or opioid use disorder. In Washington State:

- Over 80% of current heroin users started with prescription drug opioids, either through a doctor's prescription for a sport or accidental injury, or by accessing drugs in a family or friend's medicine cabinet.
- Drug overdoses are the highest cause of accidental death, surpassing car accidents and homicides.
- About 12% of teens are prescription drug abusers. Thankfully, those figures are much lower among youths in the Issaquah School District.
- The fastest growing group of accidental overdose victims are people 50 years old or older.



Safely Store Drugs

Many senior citizens use opioid drugs for legitimate reasons such as chronic long-term pain or other conditions. To protect younger members of your family from accidental poisoning, and to protect yourself from theft or deliberate abuse by outsiders, police and health officials recommend that opioid drugs be kept in a secure lock box.

There are literally dozens of lockbox models available through local pharmacies, Amazon.com, and other commercial outlets. Prices range from about \$25 on up.

Safely Dispose of Drugs

Safely dispose of the medicines you no longer need at the collection locations listed below. It's easy and convenient and there is no cost to residents to use this service. Bring medicines in their original container, or if you have loose pills, bring in a zip-lock bag.

- Newcastle Police Department, 12835 Newcastle Way, Suite 200, Newcastle
- Issaquah Police Department, 130 East Sunset Way, Issaquah
- QFC Pharmacy, 1540 NW Gilman Blvd, Issaquah
- Sammamish Police Department, Sammamish City Hall, 801 228th Avenue SE, Sammamish
- QFC Pharmacy, 4570 Klahanie Drive SE, Sammamish

Mail-back envelopes are also available at the Sammamish, Issaquah and Newcastle public libraries. You can safely place expired or unused medicines in the envelope, and drop the envelope in the nearest mail center or your own mailbox if appropriate. There is NO COST to use this service.

For the latest updates on safe medicine disposal, go to <https://kingcountysecuremedicinereturn.org/>.

Examples of opioids are: Painkillers such as morphine, methadone, Buprenorphine, hydrocodone, and oxycodone. Heroin is also an opioid and is illegal. Opioid drugs sold under brand names include: OxyContin®, Percocet®, Palladone®, Vicodin®, Percodan®, Tylox®, Tamarol® and Demerol® among others.

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