



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Press Contact

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National Prescription Drug Take Back Day to Be Held October 24, 2026

[Springfield, IL] – October 14, 2026 – Prevention First is proud to support [National Prescription Drug Take Back Day](#) on **Saturday, October 24, 2026**. Hosted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), this event offers a free, safe, and anonymous way for individuals to dispose of their unused and/or expired prescription medications. With over 4,000 collection sites nationwide, Take Back Day is a critical public safety initiative that helps protect youth, families, and communities by reducing the risk of drug misuse.

According to the [2025 National Survey on Drug Use & Health](#) (NSDUH), a total of 69.8 million Americans, roughly 24% of the population aged 12 and older, reported using illicit drugs in the past year. Included in this metric is the misuse of prescription medications, with 6.9 million individuals misusing prescription opioids, 4.9 million misusing prescription tranquilizers or sedatives, and 3.9 million misusing prescription stimulants.

These numbers offer insight into the importance of Take Back Day. Leftover pills and expired medications may not seem like a safety risk, but research from the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) suggests otherwise; most individuals who misuse prescription drugs get them from a family member or friend, often without their knowledge. By proactively disposing of these prescriptions, Illinoisans can help ensure their home medicine cabinets never become an unintended source of harm to someone they care about.

Prevention First encourages all individuals to participate in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on **October 24, 2026**, from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** local time. Tablets, capsules, and patches are accepted; needles and sharps are not. For those unable to attend, year-round medication disposal is available at more than 16,000 pharmacies, hospitals, businesses, and police stations nationwide. Find a location near you [here](#).

For more information and resources on substance misuse, visit prevention.org.

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About Prevention First

Prevention First is an Illinois-based nonprofit with more than 40 years of experience in substance use prevention and mental health promotion. Through training, technical assistance, and advocacy, Prevention First equips individuals, families, schools, and communities across Illinois with the knowledge and tools to prevent substance use before it starts. Learn more at prevention.org.

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