



## Storing medicines

Medicines can contain many ingredients. Some of these may be the active parts of the medicine that make it work. Other ingredients are the 'fillers' that help make the medicine stable. Being stable means the medicine keeps its shape and also works correctly when you use it. The way these ingredients mix together is important. Sunlight, temperature changes and humidity can affect how your medicines work. So how a medicine is stored is important, from when it is first made to when it ends up in your home. National Community Care will request any medications we are to assist you with, are safely packaged in a WebsterPak by your pharmacist of choice, with a weekly signing sheet provided by the pharmacy. This ensures additional safety measures have been implemented to ensure medication checks prior to administration.

If you are not sure about how best to store a medicine, you can:

- ask your pharmacist
- check for information on the medicine's packaging
- read the consumer medicine information (CMI) leaflet.

Storage instructions for a lot of medicines will recommend keeping the product:

- in the original packaging (this includes WebsterPaks)
- in a cool, dry place where the temperature stays below 25° or 30° C
- away from sunlight or water
- in a childproof cupboard.

Some medicines need a colder storage place, like the back of the fridge (2°– 8° C). Remember that you may need a cooler bag or esky to bring these medicines home from the pharmacy or hospital, or if you have to take them while travelling. [Where National Community Care is assisting you with these particular medications, NCC will look to implement a refrigerator temperature gauge and a Daily Temperature Recording Chart.](#)

The TGA regulates wholesaler storage requirements of medicines under the Australian Code of Good Wholesaling Practice for medicines. Wholesalers are responsible for appropriate handling, storage and distribution of medicines under the code. Pharmacists ensure medicines are stored correctly in the pharmacy before dispensing or sale.



## Disposing of unused medicines

While it may seem wasteful to dispose of unused medicines, saving them 'just in case' can be dangerous. Most medicines deteriorate with time, which can lead to changes in their chemical composition. The medicines become less effective or, in some cases, potentially harmful if they are used after their expiry date.

## Dispose of medicines safely

The Return Unwanted Medicines project is a free Australia-wide service. Local pharmacies collect out-of-date, unwanted and leftover medicines, and then arrange for them to be disposed of safely in high-temperature incinerators.

Medication disposal is something your registered nurse can assist you with, when collecting new websters, any old medications can be returned at this time to the pharmacist for appropriate disposal. Please note, Carers are prohibited to remove Schedule 8 medications from a person's home.

Historically, people often flushed unwanted medicines down the sink or toilet, or put them in the rubbish to be taken to the tip. Disposing of medicines in these ways can damage the environment, particularly streams and soils.

Using the Return Unwanted Medicines scheme ensures that your unwanted medicines are disposed of safely without harming the environment, people or pets. It also helps to make your home safer.

## Check your medicines regularly

You can take your unwanted and expired medicines back to a pharmacy at any time. So it's a good idea, every so often, to gather all the medicines in your home, and:

remove any that have passed their expiry date

go through the remaining medicines and check whether you really need them, and remove any that you no longer need

take all the expired and no-longer needed medicines to a pharmacy.

If you would like to know more about what to do with unused medicines, talk to your pharmacist.



**Territory Contacts for Regulatory and Policy Advice regarding medication management in the community**

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