

# When it's time to dispose of medicines, Let's treat it right

Finished with your pain relief medicine? After the medicines have served their purpose and helped you feel better, it's time to wave goodbye to any old, expired and unusable packs, tubes or bottles. One last job remains: careful disposal.

## **There are a few reasons why you might need to dispose of your medicines**

### **Past expiration date?**

Don't use out-of-date medicines – or if the packaging becomes damaged, as this can cause your medicine to expire faster. Expired medicines can lose their effectiveness, and some can be risky due to a change in chemical composition. They can become ineffective or cause side effects.<sup>1</sup>

### **Unused medicine?**

Don't share or leave unused medicines lying around, dispose instead – the right way – for safety reasons<sup>2</sup> and when considering the environment.<sup>3</sup>

### **Finished with your medicine?**

It's important to treat medicines carefully when you dispose of them. As with any product disposal, we should also be thinking about the environment.<sup>3</sup>



## *Quick tips for careful disposal of pain relief medicines*

Sort through your medicine cabinet regularly for any expired medicines, and any that are potentially dangerous to others, package up safely, and ask your pharmacist for advice on safe disposal.<sup>2</sup>

- ✓ Read the label
- ✓ Speak to your pharmacist
- ✓ Consider the environment

If you have any questions or concerns in managing your or your family's health, always start with a conversation with your pharmacist or doctor. Visit [www.letstreatitright.com](http://www.letstreatitright.com) for more information. Always read the label.

# The right steps for careful disposal



## Before disposing, always read the label

For disposal instructions, check the product leaflet or packaging. Still unsure? You can return them to the pharmacist or ask for guidance from your pharmacist.<sup>3</sup> Do also remove or make illegible all personal information from the prescription labels on your empty medicine bottles and packaging before recycling or disposing of them.



## Check that your medicine can be recycled

Always check the pack to see what can be safely recycled.



## Think before washing or flushing away

To help protect the environment, don't throw away medicines into our water system; don't dispose of them in the toilet or sink<sup>3</sup> (unless the drug labeling or patient information that accompanied the medicine specifically instructs you to do so). It's best to bring no longer needed and expired medicines to your local pharmacy to ask for advice.



## Disposing after using pain relief gel

If you have applied a pain gel by hand to another part of your body, once done, please wipe your hands with an absorbent paper cloth and dispose of cloth in the bin before washing your hands. Also, check the instructions for the right way to dispose of the packaging.<sup>4</sup>

Rules vary by country, so always check your local guidelines.

For more information on medicine disposal: If you're in Europe, you can also visit [www.medsdisposal.eu/](http://www.medsdisposal.eu/). If you're in another part of the world, look for local guidelines.

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Document number: PM-GL-PAN-21-00154

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2 Storing your medicines. MedlinePlus, U.S. National Library of Medicine. Reviewed January 2020. <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000534.htm>. Accessed 03 August 21

3 Disposal of Medicine in Europe. MedsDisposal. <http://medsdisposal.eu/pharmaceuticals-and-the-environment/>. Accessed 24 May 21

4 Topical Diclofenac, Global Datasheet, February 2020

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