



The Opioid Epidemic and Unused Prescriptions

Survey Results from March 2019

We protect what matters.

 Stericycle®

Survey Parameters

When: Conducted March 2019

Who: 1,200 U.S. respondents age 18+ with no demographic targeting

What: 16 question mobile survey

How: Direct to mobile users via Pollfish

Why: Designed to identify consumer concerns, habits and insight around prescription drug use, disposal and sharing

Executive Summary

The opioid epidemic is a concern among a majority of Americans

- The majority of Americans (75%) believe that people sharing or selling their unused prescriptions, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., is contributing to the growth of the opioid epidemic.
- Seventy-two percent of Americans believe having a safe and secure way to dispose of leftover/unused prescription drugs would help combat the opioid epidemic.

Americans keep (and share) unused prescriptions

- Americans hold on to their unused prescriptions for future use (37%), for fear of their illness returning (35%) or because they don't know how to get rid of them (18%).
- In fact, 47 percent of Americans currently have 1-3 bottles of unused prescriptions in their medicine cabinet followed by eight percent with 4-6 bottles, two percent with more than 10 bottles and two percent with 7-10 bottles.
- Nearly one in five Americans (17%) say they have been offered or given unused prescription drugs, including opioids, by a friend or family member, and one in 10 Americans admit they've offered or given their own unused prescription drugs to a friend or family member – for either medical or recreational use.

Executive Summary, Cont'd.

Americans continue to unknowingly dispose of unused prescriptions improperly and are concerned of the potential impact on the environment





- While the majority of Americans (71%) say their pharmacist, doctor or prescribing medical professional has never told them how to dispose of their unused prescription drugs/medicine, nearly one in four Americans (24%) say their pharmacist, doctor, or prescribing medical professional has told them so.
- As a result of not knowing how to properly dispose of unused prescriptions, nearly one in three (29%) Americans have placed leftover/unused prescription drugs in the trash (up 4% from 2018) and more than one in four (26%) have flushed leftover/unused prescription drugs down the drain/toilet (up 1% from 2018).
- Despite these improper disposal methods, more than half of Americans (60%) are concerned that the flushing of unused painkillers, like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., could pollute their drinking water or make its way into their communities' rivers and lakes.

More education and access to proper disposal methods is needed

- More than three in four Americans (77%) believe their pharmacy, hospital or doctor should help collect unused prescriptions from patients (down 1% from last year), and although the majority of Americans (86%) say they would feel comfortable asking their doctor or pharmacist how they should dispose of any unused portion of their prescriptions, nearly one in 10 (9%) admit they would not feel comfortable.
- When asked who they would be most comfortable giving back their unused prescription(s) for disposal, the majority of Americans (41%) said their pharmacist (up 2% from 2018). However, more than half of Americans (65%) do not know if their pharmacy allows them to turn in unused prescriptions for free,

Question 1 Results

In the past, what have you done with leftover/unused prescription drugs from your home medicine cabinet?

Answers		Percent
Placed in the trash		28.58%
Kept for future use		36.83%
Flushed down drain/toilet		26.25%
Gave to a family member or friend.		0.92%
I don't know		7.42%

- Nearly two in five (37%) have kept leftover/unused prescription drugs for future use.
- Nearly one in three (29%) placed leftover/unused prescription drugs in the trash.
- More than one in four (26%) have flushed leftover/unused prescription drugs down the drain/toilet.
- Almost 1% have given leftover/unused prescription drugs to a family member or friend.

Question 1 Additional Findings

Women and men keep leftover/unused prescription drugs for future use at nearly the same rate

- 37% of women admit they have kept leftover/unused prescription drugs from their home medicine cabinet for future use, compared to 36% of men

Gen Z is the most likely to keep leftover/unused prescription drugs for future use




- 40% of Gen Zs admit they have kept leftover/unused prescription drugs from their home medicine cabinet for future use, compared to 36% of Millennials and 37% of Baby Boomers who said the same

Gen Z is the most likely to place leftover/unused prescription drugs in the trash

- 35% of Gen Zs admit they have placed leftover/unused prescription drugs in the trash, compared to 30% of Millennials and 25% of Baby Boomers who said the same
- Baby Boomers are the most likely to flush leftover/unused prescription drugs down the drain/toilet, compared to 24% of Millennials and 11% of Gen Zs who said the same

Question 2 Results

Are you concerned that the flushing of unused painkillers, like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., could pollute your drinking water or make its way into your communities' rivers and lakes?

Answers		Percent
Yes		60.17%
No		25.50%
I don't know		14.33%

- More than half of Americans (60%) are concerned that the flushing of unused painkillers, like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., could pollute their drinking water or make its way into their communities' rivers and lakes.
- More than one in four Americans (26%) are not concerned.

Question 2 Additional Findings

Men are more concerned than women that the flushing of unused painkillers could pollute their drinking water or make its way into their communities' rivers and lakes

- 62% of men admit they are concerned that the flushing of unused painkillers, like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., could pollute their drinking water or make its way into their communities' rivers and lakes, compared to 59% of women

Baby Boomers are the most concerned that the flushing of unused painkillers could pollute their drinking water or make its way into their communities' rivers and lakes

- 65% of Baby Boomers admit they are concerned that the flushing of unused painkillers, like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., could pollute their drinking water or make its way into their communities' rivers and lakes, compared to 60% of Millennials and 57% of Gen Zs

Question 3 Results

Of the following, what reason would best describe why you would keep unused prescription drugs?

Answers		Percent
I paid for them, I don't want to waste them	—	19.58%
I would use them recreationally	-	3.00%
I'm afraid my illness or pain would return	—	35.08%
I don't know how to get rid of them	—	18.25%
I would not keep unused prescription pills	—	24.08%

- When asked why they would keep unused prescription drugs, nearly two in five (35%) said they were afraid their illness or pain would return, compared to nearly one in four (24%) who said they would not keep unused prescription pills. Another one in five (20%) said they paid for them and don't want to waste them, 18% said they don't know how to get rid of them. Three percent said they would use them recreationally.

Question 3 Additional Findings

Men are more likely than women to keep unused prescription drugs because they were afraid their illness or pain would return

- 37% of men admit they would keep unused prescription drugs because they were afraid their illness or pain would return, compared to 34% of women

Women also said:

- I paid for them, I don't want to waste them (19%)
- I would use them recreationally (3%)
- I don't know how to get rid of them (21%)
- I would not keep unused prescription pills (24%)

Men also said:

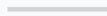





- I paid for them, I don't want to waste them (21%)
- I would use them recreationally (3%)
- I don't know how to get rid of them (15%)
- I would not keep unused prescription pills (25%)

Baby Boomers are the most likely to keep unused prescription drugs because they were afraid their illness or pain would return

- 37% of Baby Boomers admit they would keep unused prescription drugs because they were afraid their illness or pain would return, compared to 34% of Gen Zs and 31% of Millennials

Question 4 Results

Currently, how many bottles of leftover/unused prescriptions do you have in your medicine cabinet?

Answers		Percent
0		40.00%
1-3		46.75%
4-6		8.00%
7-10		1.83%
More than 10		1.58%
I don't know		1.83%

- While 40% of Americans say they currently have zero bottles of leftover/unused prescriptions in their medicine cabinet, 47% have 1-3 bottles, eight percent have 4-6 bottles, two percent have more than 10 bottles and two percent have 7-10 bottles of unused prescriptions in their medicine cabinet.

Question 4 Additional Findings

Men and women have the same amount of bottles of leftover/unused prescriptions in their medicine cabinet

- 47% of men and women admit they have 1-3 bottles of leftover/unused prescriptions in their medicine cabinet

Millennials have more leftover/unused bottles of prescriptions in their medicine cabinet than Gen Zs and Baby Boomers

- More than half of Millennials (52%) have 1-3 bottles of leftover/unused prescriptions in their medicine cabinet, 7% have 4-6, 2% have 7-10, and 1% have more than 10. Thirty-six percent have zero leftover/unused bottles of prescriptions in their medicine cabinet.
- More than two in five Baby Boomers (42%) have 1-3 bottles of leftover/unused prescriptions in their medicine cabinet, 7% have 4-6, 1% have 7-10, and 2% have more than 10. Almost half (47%) have zero leftover/unused bottles of prescriptions in their medicine cabinet.
- Nearly two in five Gen Zs (39%) have 1-3 bottles of leftover/unused prescriptions in their medicine cabinet, 8% have 4-6, 1% have 7-10, 3% have more than 10. Thirty-eight percent have zero leftover/unused bottles of prescriptions in their medicine cabinet.

Question 5 Results

Have you ever been offered or given unused prescription drugs, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., by a friend or family member (for either medical or recreational use)?

Answers		Percent
Yes		16.50%
No		82.25%
I don't know		1.25%

- Although 82% of Americans say they have not been offered or given unused prescription drugs, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., by a friend or family member (for either medical or recreational use), nearly one in five (17%) Americans say they have.

Question 5 Additional Findings

Women are more likely than men to admit they have been offered or given unused prescription drugs




- 17% of women admit they have been offered or given unused prescription drugs, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., by a friend or family member (for either medical or recreational use), compared to 16% of men

Millennials are the most likely to admit they have been offered or given unused prescription drugs

- Nearly one in four Millennials (23%) admit they have been offered or given unused prescription drugs, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., by a friend or family member (for either medical or recreational use), compared to 16% of Gen Zs and 8% of Baby Boomers

Question 6 Results

Have you ever offered or given your unused prescription drugs, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., to a friend or family member (for either medical or recreational use)?

Answers		Percent
Yes		9.50%
No		90.17%
I don't know		0.33%

- Although the majority of Americans (90%) say they have not offered or given their unused prescription drugs, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., to a friend or family member (for either medical or recreational use), one in 10 say they have.

Question 6 Additional Findings

Women are more likely than men to admit they have offered or given their unused prescription drugs to a friend or family member




- One in 10 women admit they have offered or given their unused prescription drugs, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., to a friend or family member (for either medical or recreational use), compared to 9% of men

Millennials are the most likely to admit they have offered or given their unused prescription drugs to a friend or family member

- 15% of Millennials admit they have offered or given their unused prescription drugs, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., to a friend or family member, compared to 5% of Baby Boomers and 4% of Gen Zs

Question 7 Results

Do you believe that people sharing or selling their unused prescriptions, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., is contributing to growth of the opioid epidemic?

Answers		Percent
Yes		74.58%
No		16.50%
I don't know		8.92%

- The majority of Americans (75%) believe that people sharing or selling their unused prescriptions, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., is contributing to growth of the opioid epidemic, compared to 17% who say they do not believe so.

Question 7 Additional Findings

Men and women almost equally agree that people sharing or selling their unused prescriptions is contributing to growth of the opioid epidemic




- 74% of men and 75% of women believe that people sharing or selling their unused prescriptions, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., is contributing to growth of the opioid epidemic

Gen Zs are the least likely to believe that people sharing or selling their unused prescriptions is contributing to growth of the opioid epidemic

- 69% of Gen Zs believe that people sharing or selling their unused prescriptions, including opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc., is contributing to growth of the opioid epidemic, compared to 73% of Millennials and 77% of Baby Boomers

Question 8 Results

Do you believe that having a safe and secure way to dispose of leftover/unused prescription drugs would help combat the opioid epidemic?

Answers		Percent
Yes		72.25%
No		14.92%
I don't know		12.83%

- The majority of Americans (72%) believe having a safe and secure way to dispose of leftover/unused prescription drugs would help combat the opioid epidemic, compared to 15% who do not believe so.

Question 8 Additional Findings

Men are much more likely than women to believe that having a safe and secure way to dispose of leftover/unused prescription drugs would help combat the opioid epidemic

- 75% of men believe that having a safe and secure way to dispose of leftover/unused prescription drugs would help combat the opioid epidemic, compared to 70% of women

Millennials are the most likely to believe that having a safe and secure way to dispose of leftover/unused prescription drugs would help combat the opioid epidemic

- More than three in four (77%) Millennials believe that having a safe and secure way to dispose of leftover/unused prescription drugs would help combat the opioid epidemic, compared to 73% of Gen Zs and 71% of Baby Boomers

Question 9 Results

Has your pharmacist, doctor, or prescribing medical professional ever told you how to dispose of your unused prescription drugs/medicine?

Answers		Percent
Yes		24.25%
No		70.83%
I don't know		4.92%

- The majority of Americans (71%) say their pharmacist, doctor, or prescribing medical professional has never told them how to dispose of their unused prescription drugs/medicine.
- Nearly one in four Americans (24%) say their pharmacist, doctor, or prescribing medical professional has told them so.

Question 9 Additional Findings

Women compared to men are more likely to say their pharmacist, doctor, or prescribing medical professional never told them how to dispose of unused prescription drugs/medicine




- 72% of women say their pharmacist, doctor, or prescribing medical professional never told them how to dispose of unused prescription drugs/medicine, compared to 69% of men

Baby Boomers are the most likely to say their pharmacist, doctor, or prescribing medical professional never told them how to dispose of unused prescription drugs/medicine

- More than three in four (76%) Baby Boomers say their pharmacist, doctor, or prescribing medical professional never told them how to dispose of unused prescription drugs/medicine, compared to 71% of Gen Zs and 63% of Millennials

Question 10 Results

Do you believe that your pharmacy, hospital or doctor should help collect unused prescriptions from patients?

Answers		Percent
Yes		76.67%
No		13.42%
I don't know		9.92%

- More than three in four (77%) Americans believe their pharmacy, hospital or doctor should help collect unused prescriptions from patients.
- Thirteen percent of Americans do not believe so.

Question 10 Additional Findings

Men and women equally agree that their pharmacy, hospital or doctor should help collect unused prescriptions from patients

- 77% of men and women believe their pharmacy, hospital or doctor should help collect unused prescriptions from patients

Millennials are the most likely to believe that their pharmacy, hospital or doctor should help collect unused prescriptions from patients

- 77% of Millennials believe that their pharmacy, hospital or doctor should help collect unused prescriptions from patients, compared to 76% of Baby Boomers and Gen Zs

Question 11 Results

If you had to choose from the list below, who would you be most comfortable giving back your unused prescription(s) for disposal?

Answers	Percent
My local police department	16.33%
My pharmacist	41.42%
My doctor / local hospital	19.92%
Mailback with a specialized kit and service for unused pharmaceuticals	11.25%
I don't know	11.08%

- When asked who they would be most comfortable giving back their unused prescription(s) for disposal, the majority of Americans (41%) said their pharmacist
 - 20% are most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) to their doctor/local hospital
 - 16% are most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) to their local police department
 - 11% are most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) to a mailback with specialized kit and service for unused pharmaceuticals

Question 11 Additional Findings

The majority of men and women are the most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) for disposal to their pharmacist

- 42% of men and 41% of women say they are they most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) for disposal to their pharmacist
- Women are also the most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) for disposal to their doctor/local hospital (19%), local police department (17%), mailback with a specialized kit and service for unused pharmaceuticals (10%)
- Men are also the most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) for disposal to their doctor/local hospital (21%), local police department (15%), mailback with a specialized kit and service for unused pharmaceuticals (13%)

Millennials are the most likely to be comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) for disposal to their pharmacist

- 41% of Millennials admit they are the most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) for disposal to their pharmacist, doctor/local hospital (27%), local police department (14%), mailback with a specialized kit and service for unused pharmaceuticals (11%)
- 39% of Baby Boomers admit they are the most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) for disposal to their pharmacist, doctor/local hospital (18%), local police department (21%), mailback with a specialized kit and service for unused pharmaceuticals (10%)
- 38% of Gen Zs admit they are the most comfortable giving back unused prescription(s) for disposal to their pharmacist, doctor/local hospital (29%), local police department (11%), mailback with a specialized kit and service for unused pharmaceuticals (7%)

Question 12 Results

Does your local retail pharmacy allow you to turn in unused prescriptions for free?

Answers		Percent
Yes	—	17.30%
No	—	18.11%
I don't know if my pharmacist offers this	—————	64.59%

- The majority of Americans (65%) do not know if their pharmacy allows them to turn in unused prescriptions for free.
 - 18% say their local retail pharmacy does not allow them to turn in unused prescriptions for free
 - 17% say their local retail pharmacy does allow them to turn in unused prescriptions for free

Question 12 Additional Findings

Majority of men and women don't know if their pharmacist allows them to turn in unused prescriptions for free




- 62% of men and 66% of women admit they do not know if their pharmacist allows them to turn in unused prescriptions for free
- Men (18%) are more likely than women (17%) to say their local retail pharmacy allows them to turn in unused prescriptions for free, compared to 20% of men and 17% of women who say their local retail pharmacy does not allow them to do so

Gen Zs are the most unsure if their pharmacist allows them to turn in unused prescriptions for free

- 66% of Gen Zs, 65% of Baby Boomers and 61% of Millennials admit they do not know if their pharmacist allows them to turn in unused prescriptions for free
- Millennials (23%) are more likely than Gen Zs (18%) and Baby Boomers (16%) to say their local retail pharmacy allows them to turn in unused prescriptions for free

Question 13 Results

If your local pharmacy retailer had a free prescription/over the counter medication drop off kiosk, would you use it to dispose of unused medication/prescriptions?

Answers		Percent
Yes		79.58%
No		10.08%
I don't know		10.33%

- Eighty percent of Americans say if their local pharmacy retailer had a free prescription/over the counter medication drop off kiosk, they would use it to dispose of unused medication/prescriptions.
- One in 10 admit they would not use it to dispose of unused medication/prescriptions.

Question 13 Additional Findings

If their local pharmacy retailer had a free prescription/over the counter medication drop off kiosk, men and women equally say they would use it to dispose of unused medication/prescriptions

- More than three in four (80%) say they would use a free prescription/over the counter medication drop off kiosk to dispose of unused medication/prescriptions if their local pharmacy retailer had one

Gen Zs are the least likely to use a free prescription/over the counter medication drop off kiosk to dispose of unused medication/prescriptions

- **73% of Gen Zs say they** would use a free prescription/over the counter medication drop off kiosk to dispose of unused medication/prescriptions if their local pharmacy retailer had one, compared to 80% of Baby Boomers and 81% of Millennials

Question 14 Results

Have you ever given back or dropped off any unused medications (prescription drugs or over-the-counter medication) as part of a “drug takeback program”?

Answers		Percent
Yes		16.92%
No		80.08%
I don't know		3.00%

- The majority of Americans (80%) have never given back or dropped off unused medications (prescription drugs or over-the-counter medication) as part of a “drug takeback program,” compared to 17% who say they have.

Question 14 Additional Findings

The majority of men and women have not given back or dropped off unused medications as part of a “drug takeback program”


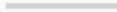

- 77% of men and 82% of women say they have not given back or dropped off any unused medications (prescription drugs or over-the-counter medication) as part of a “drug takeback program”
- 19% of men and 15% of women say they have

Baby Boomers are the most likely to have given back or dropped off unused medications as part of a “drug takeback program”

- Baby Boomers (19%) are more likely than Millennials (16%) and Gen Zs (12%) to say they have given back or dropped off any unused medications (prescription drugs or over-the-counter medication) as part of a “drug takeback program”

Question 15 Results

Do you want to know about any drug takeback programs in your local community or the Drug Enforcement Agency's drug takeback day itself?

Answers		Percent
Yes		50.42%
No		37.50%
I don't know		12.08%

- Half of Americans (50%) admit they want to know about any drug takeback programs in their local community or the Drug Enforcement Agency's drug takeback day.
- Nearly two and five (38%) admit they do not want to know about any drug takeback programs in their local community or the Drug Enforcement Agency's drug takeback day.

Question 15 Additional Findings

Men are more likely than women want to know about drug takeback programs




- More than half of men (54%) say they want to know about drug takeback programs in their local community or the Drug Enforcement Agency's drug takeback day itself, compared to women (48%)

Gen Zs are the least likely to want to know about drug takeback programs

- 34% of Gen Zs say they want to know about drug takeback programs in their local community or the Drug Enforcement Agency's drug takeback day itself, compared to Millennials (47%) and more than half of Baby Boomers (57%)

Question 16 Results

Would you feel comfortable asking your doctor or pharmacist how you should dispose of any unused portion of your prescriptions?

Answers		Percent
Yes		85.92%
No		9.25%
I don't know		4.83%

- Although the majority of Americans (86%) say they would feel comfortable asking their doctor or pharmacist how they should dispose of any unused portion of their prescriptions, nearly one in 10 (9%) admit they would not feel comfortable.

Question 16 Additional Findings

When compared to men, women are more comfortable asking their doctor or pharmacist how they should dispose of any unused portion of their prescriptions

- Women (87%) are more comfortable than men (84%) asking their doctor or pharmacist how they should dispose of any unused portion of their prescriptions

Gen Zs are the least comfortable asking their doctor or pharmacist how they should dispose of any unused portion of their prescriptions

- Gen Zs (74%) are the least comfortable asking their doctor or pharmacist how they should dispose of any unused portion of their prescriptions, compared to Millennials (84%) and Baby Boomers (89%)



Thank you.

We protect what matters.

 **Stericycle**[®]