

Medication Safety Risks

Securely and safely storing medications when not in use prevents accidental poisoning among children and keeps homes safe. If you or someone you know struggles with thoughts about hurting themselves or suicide, storing medications securely may prevent an intentional overdose.

Safe Practices for Medication Storage

SECURE YOUR MEDICATIONS TO PREVENT INTENTIONAL OR UNINTENTIONAL OVERDOSE

- Ask a family member or friend to manage your access to medications.
- Portion out pills for the week in a medication pillbox and lock the rest away.
- Store over-the-counter (OTC) medications securely in a lockbox, lockable cabinet or drawer away from food items.

CHECK AND DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS

- Inspect and dispose of any medications past the expiration date.
- Dispose of any medication unused in the past 12 months.

FOR OPIOID USERS

- Ask your doctor for a prescription of Naloxone - an antidote for opioid drug overdose - if using prescribed or illicit opioid medications (e.g., fentanyl, oxycodone, morphine).
- Learn usage of opioids and store securely in a locked cabinet or other space away from children or pets.

DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS RESPONSIBLY

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about options for disposing of unused medications.
- Utilize VA Medication Take Back Days at your local VA Medical Center.
- Take unused medications to your local pharmacy.
- Request a medication return envelope from your VA prescriber.
- Locate a medication disposal site by using the locator tool provided by The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

<https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main>

Resources

To help keep yourself and your family safe, several crisis resources and centers are available. Visit our resources for more valuable information and support on owning a firearm, living in a household with firearms, or taking prescription medications.

VETERAN CRISIS LINE

- <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net> (IN ENGLISH)
- <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/es> (IN SPANISH)

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year in both English and Spanish.

To reach the Veterans Crisis Line, dial 988, then press 1, chat online at [veteranscrisisline.net/chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/chat), or text 838255.



SECURE FIREARMS STORAGE RESOURCES

<http://keepitsecure.net> (IN ENGLISH)

THE U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

<https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main> (IN ENGLISH)



Secure Firearm and Medication Storage for Hispanic/Latino Veterans

You can protect the health and well-being of yourself and your family by securely storing firearms and medications in your home.



How to Recognize and Talk About Suicide Risk

There are proactive steps you can take to protect yourself and your family, especially during times of crisis and when there are concerns about someone's mental health.

WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE RISK:



Talking or joking about death or suicide



Feeling extremely sad, anxious, or angry



Changes in behavior, such as withdrawing from friends or family, mood swings, or taking dangerous risks



Using drugs or alcohol more often



Feeling nervous, tired, or having physical pain or stress

If you are experiencing any of these signs, talk about temporarily storing firearms with a trusted friend or relative or elsewhere. Talk to a primary care physician, mental health counseling center, or seek care at an emergency department.

The Veterans Crisis Line also offers free, confidential support and crisis intervention 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year in both **English** and **Spanish**.

To reach the Veterans Crisis Line, **dial 988, then press 1**, chat online at veteranscrisisline.net/chat, or text **838255**.

Secure firearm storage prevents suicide by putting time and space between a person in crisis and a lethal method of self-harm, allowing for the crisis to resolve or lessen.

Firearm Safety Risks



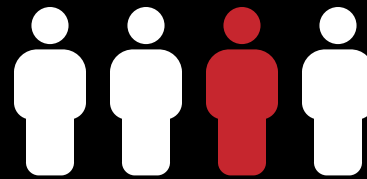
50%

of all Veterans own a firearm.



3x

The risk for suicide in households with loaded firearms is 3 times greater than households with unloaded firearms.



1 in 4

individuals attempt suicide within just five minutes of deciding to do so.

How to Keep Firearms Securely Stored

There are several ways to secure household firearms, shown below.



Keep firearms **unloaded** when not in use



Securely **lock** firearms with the **safety** activated



Use a cable/trigger lock or place in a secure lockbox



Store ammunition in a separate location from firearms



In times of crisis, ask a significant other to temporarily store household firearms



Talk to health, primary care, or reproductive health provider about firearm access and storage

Keep It Secure

Learn more about firearm storage and find the option that works best for you and your family at: <http://keepitsecure.net>



CABLE LOCK
Price: \$10-\$50



LOCKBOX
Price: \$25-\$350



GUN SAFE
Price: \$200-\$2,500