



SAFE HANDLING OF CONTROLLED DRUGS

What is a controlled drug?

Controlled drugs are prescription medicines listed under the Misuse of Drugs Act. While these medicines are useful to treat various health conditions such as pain and/or breathlessness, they have a potential to be misused, obtained illegally, and may even cause harm. Stricter legal controls are applied to these medicines to ensure that they are distributed in a safer and more effective manner. These legal controls specify how these medicines should be:

1. Produced
2. Stored
3. Prescribed
4. Supplied
5. Disposed

How does this affect me?

If you are prescribed a controlled drug, it is important that you:

1. Store your medicine properly and safely at home
2. Keep your medicine out of the sight and reach of children
3. Prevent others from using the medicine

There are also special requirements for disposing of controlled drugs properly, so any unused controlled drugs should be returned to your respective health institution's pharmacy for disposal.

When should I dispose of my controlled drugs?

As with all other medicines, controlled drugs should be disposed of promptly when:

1. Expired, or when there is doubt about the expiry date, e.g. if the box was damaged or if a part of the blister strip was cut off
2. Shelf-life is reduced, e.g. due to improper storage conditions
3. Signs of deterioration, e.g. change in colour, smell or consistency
4. Treatment is no longer required by the person it is intended for, and is not meant for standby for use on an as-needed basis

How should I dispose of my expired or unused controlled medicines?

Proper disposal of controlled drugs is essential to prevent misuse, abuse and accidental consumption, which may cause harm. Any unused / expired / unwanted controlled drugs should be returned **to your respective health institution's pharmacy** for disposal. The pharmacy will dispose of the medicines safely, in accordance with legal requirements.

- Blank out or remove parts of sticky labels containing personal data such as name or personal particulars (e.g. NRIC number, address, etc).
- Remove any syringes or needles prior to returning medications for disposal.