



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Host a Medication Return Event in your Community

Community Event Information Sheet

Make it easy for community members to dispose of unwanted medication

For Medication Return events, community partners can join forces to collect unused or expired prescription (or non-prescription) drugs from communities. Volunteers can go door-to-door to gather any medications that residents would like to dispose of, or members can drop them off on the event day. Medications are then safely disposed of by the local pharmacy or a community partner.

Why host a Medication Return Event?

Forgotten and expired medications can collect in people's homes for months or years, presenting a risk if they end up in the hands of children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Community events, or going door-to-door, also provide a great opportunity to talk to community members about other relevant public health topics.

Apply for a Medication Return Event Grant

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) offers \$500 grants to help offset the cost of hosting a Medication Return Event. You can also use the funds to host a community meal. Bring volunteers and community members together and raise awareness of the event before the event day.



Tips for Organizing Your Medication Return Event

Recruit partners and volunteers

- Ask for community organizations to partner with you in hosting the event. Partners could be the local pharmacy, your Regional Health Authority, the FNHA, community Health Centre, Home Care Nurses, Fire Departments, RCMP, First Nation Council, or others
- If going door-to-door, you will need a small group of volunteers on the day of the event. Recruit roughly 20 volunteers per 1,000 community members
- Volunteers will be going out in pairs and knocking on doors for two to three hours, ideally on a weekend
- Vet volunteers to ensure they are not vulnerable adults. Volunteers will be handling drugs
- Create volunteer photo ID to provide credibility
- For community members who won't be home on event day, provide the opportunity to drop off medication at a designated and secured location, such as your local Health Centre
- Start or end the event with a community lunch or dinner, ask partners to provide a presentation on the safe use of medication or other topics of interest
- Leverage this funding to coincide with another compatible event such as a Health Fair

Advertise your event

- Write an article and publish it in your community newspaper or e-newsletter
- Publish social media posts about the event on all partner social media platforms
- Place attention-grabbing posters in high-traffic areas in your community
- Deliver a flyer to mailboxes a few days before the event as a reminder
- Ask your home care team to tell their patients about the event. Many of their patients are Elders and often have many medications at home
- If you are partnering with RCMP/police, create trust with community members by making it clear that officers are not there for enforcement and that no one will be arrested

Safe disposal of medication

Work with community health partners such as pharmacists or health authorities to ensure safe disposal of the unwanted medication. (Partners might work with a commercial waste disposal company such as Stericycle.)

Feedback from previous events

- *"A pharmacist provided a presentation on the disposal of expired medications."*
- *"We delivered a flyer the week before door to door. The event was drop-in from 10 to 2 with a pharmacist on hand to answer questions. We provided snacks and had a prize draw."*
- *"We advertised on our Community Facebook page and went door to door."*
- *"The event provided an opportunity for our nurse to make a presentation."*
- *"Participants found the information to be very helpful – we'd like to do this again!"*

Funding is provided through the FNHA Healthy Medication Use project.

Contact us at: HealthyMedicationUse@fnha.ca

For more information, see Medication Return Event Grant:
<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/health-system/medication-return-event-grant>