

Safety info for opioids found lacking

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(HealthDay)—Information about safe storage and disposal of opioid painkillers on the drugs' package inserts is inconsistent, and even missing from some products, researchers report.

Incorrect [storage](#) or disposal of unused opioid painkillers is common and a major source of illegal opioid medication use, the new study found.

The researchers examined 98 [package](#) inserts for six commonly prescribed and misused types of opioid pain relievers: Vicodin (hydrocodone); Exalgo (hydromorphone); Ultram (tramadol); fentanyl; morphine; and Oxycontin (oxycodone).

Collectively, the package inserts had one safe-storage message and three different types of safe-disposal messages. About two-thirds of the 35 package inserts with the safe-storage message and 70 to 80 percent of package inserts with a safe-disposal message were for oxycodone or morphine products.

None of the inserts for tramadol products had storage or disposal messages. And only one of the 33 package inserts for hydrocodone products had a storage or disposal message, according to lead study author Mitchell Doucette and colleagues at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for Injury Research and Policy.

The report was published April 16 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

The findings show that lawmakers should consider requiring safe storage and disposal information on package inserts for all [opioid](#) painkillers, the researchers said in a journal news release.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse has more about [opioid medications](#).

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