



Highlight of the Month: National Prescription Take Back Day

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is advised twice a year—April and October, to provide individuals with a safe and responsible way to dispose of unused or expired prescription substances. Naval Commands and Sailors are encouraged to participate in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on April 25. This initiative, organized by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), provides a secure, convenient, and anonymous method for disposing of unused or expired prescription medications. Why Is Prescription Drug Take Back Day important for Sailors?

- **Preventing substance misuse and dependency:** A significant number of individuals who misuse prescription substances obtain them from friends or family, often from home medicine cabinets. Properly disposing of these medications removes a potential source for substance misuse and diversion, contributing to the fight against the ongoing opioid crisis. Opioids, including illicit fentanyl, are a major factor in overdose mortality rates.
- **Safety and Environmental Protections:** Traditional disposal methods such as flushing medications down the toilet or throwing them in the trash can pose safety and health hazards, including contaminating water supplies. This awareness day actively combats this by creating environmentally safe disposal options.
- **Accessibility:** The DEA, in coordination with thousands of law enforcement partners, establishes numerous [collection sites nationwide](#), making it easy for communities to participate. National Take Back Day, in October of 2025 “brought in [571,054 lbs. \(286 Tons\)](#) of medication.” It is currently recorded that since 2010 the DEA has collected [about 20,391,815lbs](#) of medication. These collection events have included accepting tablets, capsules, patches, and other solid forms of prescription substances. Vaping devices and cartridges are also accepted, provided lithium batteries are removed.
- **How to participate and what to leave at home:** Accepted items include prescription and over-the-counter pills, liquids (in sealed original containers), medicated ointments, and pet medications. Items not accepted are syringes, needles, illicit substances, and aerosol cans.

By encouraging participation in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, Naval Commands and Sailors can play a crucial role in safeguarding their communities, preventing substance misuse, and protecting the environment.

Primary Prevention Team: Coping with Stress

April is [Alcohol Awareness Month](#), a national observance that raises awareness about alcohol misuse. April is also [Stress Awareness Month](#), highlighting the importance of recognizing stress early and understanding how unmanaged stress can influence negative coping behaviors, including alcohol misuse. Managing stress early helps reduce alcohol-related risks and supports readiness.

Coping skills are healthy ways people manage stress to stay balanced and make better decisions. After long deployments, stress can build up and affect decision-making. When stress goes unmanaged, some individuals may turn to unhealthy [coping behaviors](#), including alcohol misuse, to deal with pressure. Over time, this can impair judgment, lower inhibition, and increase the risk of alcohol-related incidents. Strengthening coping skills reinforces protective factors that support [Total Sailor: Fit to Fight principles](#).

Being aware of prevention tools and resources that support healthy coping habits before stress triggers alcohol misuse and impacts performance is critical.

Programs such as Expanded Operational Stress Control ([E-OSC](#)) reinforce peer support, self-awareness, and connectedness to help Sailors recognize stress early. Stress can disrupt nutrition, affect energy, recovery, overall performance, and ultimately impact readiness during operational demands. Navy resources such as [GUIDE-10](#) provide practical strategies for maintaining healthy nutrition and recovery habits in high-stress environments. Using these resources early strengthens protective factors and reduces the risk of negative coping behaviors.

Encourage Sailors to use tools that support healthy coping and informed decision-making, such as the [Chill Drills App](#) for short, relaxing audio exercises for stress management, and Alcohol Awareness tools ([drink size](#), [BAC](#), and alcohol [calorie](#) calculators) to better understand how drinking impacts health, finances, and readiness when navigating stress or feeling triggered.

You Tube

Messages to Share:

- Register for the OPNAV N173 webinar [AM](#) or [PM](#) sessions.
- Registration for FY 26 fleetwide prevention webinars are open! Visit the [Prevention Toolkit](#) to register.
- APR 6-12: [National Public Health Week](#), is advised to observe how public health strategies and collaborations help to improve our daily lives.
- APR 7: [World Health Day](#) is an annual observance to increase awareness to global health concerns.
- APR 25: [National Drug Take Back Day](#) is a safe way to dispose of your expired or unused prescription substances.
- [National Distracted Driving Awareness Month](#): increases awareness of the dangers of driving distracted.

SPOTLIGHT: Webinar/Training/ Prevention Power-Up

Webinar: Aftercare
Date: [APR 02](#)

Webinar: Inspection Checklist
Date: [APR 09](#)

Webinar: End of Year Testing (6 Month Report)
Date: [APR 16](#)

Webinar: Summar Safety and Prevention
Date: [APR 23](#)

Webinar: iFTDTL Reports
Date: [APR 30](#)

Training: CMTs
Link: [Click here](#)

Training: ADAMS & UPC Course
Link: [Navy e-Learning](#)

Training: DAPA Courses
Link: [CANTRAC](#)



Systems Team: Safeguarding Navy Children

As Sailors, your core mission is to protect our nation and support our shipmates. This fundamental commitment extends beyond the confines of our ships and stations to the youngest, most vulnerable members of our Navy family.

The connection between substance misuse and child welfare is a serious concern, backed by sobering research from the [National Institutes of Health](#). A parent struggling with a substance use disorder is three times more likely to emotionally, physically, or sexually abuse their child. Across the nation, over 8 million children live in households grappling with this issue. These children face not only immediate danger but are also three to four times more likely to develop their own addiction, perpetuating a destructive generational cycle. This early exposure to trauma can also lead to other long-term challenges, including poor school performance, mental health issues like depression, and difficulty forming healthy relationships.

From a prevention standpoint, awareness and proactive support are our most effective strategies. The unique stressors of military life, including demanding operational tempos, deployments, and frequent relocations, can amplify family stress. It is therefore our collective duty to foster a command climate where seeking help is recognized as a courageous act of strength. This means actively looking out for our fellow Sailors, recognizing warning signs of distress or substance misuse, and encouraging them to access confidential resources without fear of judgment or career repercussions. A stable and healthy home front is a critical component of mission readiness. When our Sailors know their families are safe and supported, they can remain focused on their duties.

April's observances of [National Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) and the [Month of the Military Child](#) provide a vital opportunity to reinforce this message. We can strengthen our Navy community by ensuring every family knows about the supportive resources available through [Military One Source](#), including its dedicated [Military Parent Resource Center](#).

For specific guidance on deterrence, the Navy's Prevention Toolkit ([PTK](#)) offers valuable strategies. By understanding the research and taking preventative action, we uphold our commitment to our mission and to the well-being of our entire Navy family.



The above photo is an Adobe Stock photo displaying gentle hand holding between an adult and child.

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The OPNAV N173 Navy Substance Prevention & Deterrence office was established in 1982. The foundation of our office is sustained by our pursuit to support Fleet readiness by combating illegal and illicit substance and alcohol misuse. Our mission is to provide comprehensive education, resources, trainings, and enact policy updates to ensure Sailors receive proper awareness to form career-forwarding decisions. Within our office, whole health matters and this is reflected with our Primary Prevention team, the Alcohol and Drug Management Information and Tracking System (ADMITS), Internet Forensic Toxicology Drug Testing Laboratory Portal (iFTDTL), the Web Drug Testing Program (WebDTP) and other pro-grams that increase prevention efforts.

For more information, contact our office by using the phone and email information on this page or use the QRcode to view our webpage.



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