

What happens to expired medicines? Myths vs facts

Let's discuss expired medicines, and why it is important to check medicines before using them. We will also discuss a few myths around expired medicines to help you make correct judgment regarding medicines and their uses in the future. The expiration date of medicines is determined through rigorous testing and regulatory oversight to ensure their safety, efficacy, and quality over a specified period.



Every house has a medicine box with expired medicines. We simply check the expiry date or expiry month of a medicine. But have you ever wondered what happens after a medicine crosses the expiry date: does it become counterproductive? Does it become ineffective? Or does it become poisonous?

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We will also discuss a few myths around expired medicines to help you make correct judgment regarding medicines and their uses in the future.

How is the expiry date of a medicine decided?

The expiration date of medicines is determined through rigorous testing and regulatory oversight to ensure their safety, efficacy, and quality over a specified period.

Pharmaceutical manufacturers conduct extensive stability testing on their products to assess how they degrade over time under various storage conditions. This involves exposing medications to factors like temperature, humidity, light, and oxygen levels to mimic real-world scenarios. Through these studies, scientists monitor the chemical composition, potency, and physical characteristics of the medication to determine when it may no longer meet quality standards.

Regulatory agencies establish guidelines and standards for determining expiration dates. These agencies require pharmaceutical companies to submit stability data as part of the drug approval process. Based on this data, regulatory authorities evaluate the shelf life of medications and specify expiration dates that ensure their safety and effectiveness when stored and used according to labeled instructions.

Each batch or lot of medications undergoes quality control testing to verify its stability and adherence to regulatory standards before distribution. This batch testing helps ensure consistency and reliability in expiration dating across different manufacturing runs of the same medication.

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