



# For Community Leaders: All Materials

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\*The presentation is also available in Spanish at [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/community](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/community).

\*\*The **Family Action Planning Guide** as well as the **Informational Resource Sheets** are available at [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/families](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/families) in the following six languages:

- |           |           |              |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| ▶ English | ▶ French  | ▶ Tagalog    |
| ▶ Spanish | ▶ Chinese | ▶ Vietnamese |



Support for the development of this education material was provided by





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## OTC Medicine Safety Program 101



### What Is the *OTC Medicine Safety Program*?

- ▶ A **free**, evidence-based, comprehensive Common Core–ready educational program on the safe use of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, with a rich online hub at **scholastic.com/otcmedsafety**
- ▶ Lesson plans, teacher/facilitator guides, student worksheets, activities, posters, assessment tools, family resources, and videos target 5th- and 6th-grade classroom, health, and physical-education teachers; school nurses; and community leaders and coalitions



### *OTC Medicine Safety Program Effectiveness*

- ▶ Evidence-based program tested with more than 1,000 students
- ▶ Modeled after FDA's Medicines in My Home program
- ▶ Tested with teachers, students, and leading organizations in pediatrics and education



### Why Do We Need *OTC Medicine Safety*?

- ▶ Research shows that students begin to self-medicate around age 11. If not equipped with the knowledge and training to make safe choices, mistakes can happen.
- ▶ By age 16, approximately 90% of adolescents report self-administering OTC medications.
- ▶ In 2013, America's poison centers managed more than 250,000 exposure cases involving children ages 6 to 19; more than half of these cases involved medication errors and misuse.



### *OTC Medicine Safety's Learning Outcomes*

- ▶ Identify the differences between prescription (Rx) and OTC medicines.
- ▶ Understand the importance of the *Drug Facts* label and be able to identify its different sections.
- ▶ Understand safe storage locations for OTC medicines.
- ▶ Understand that using OTC medicines irresponsibly can cause harm.
- ▶ Recognize unsafe situations involving OTC medicines and brainstorm solutions using problem-solving skills.
- ▶ Identify the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) and understand that this free resource is available to support safe medicine use.



Keep students and the community safe by teaching about responsible medicine use today.

ACCESS THE FREE COMPLETE EDUCATION PROGRAM TODAY  
[scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety)



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# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## Program Overview

### Building a More Responsible Generation

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines help us feel better when we are sick and assist us in sustaining healthy lifestyles. However, now more than ever, people are self-medicating at an earlier age. Did you know that some children begin to self-medicate at around age 11—in fifth and sixth grades? In fact, by the time they reach age 16, approximately 90 percent admit taking OTC medicines on their own. Community antidrug coalitions know that OTC medicines—when taken as directed—are generally safe; however, when taken incorrectly, they can be dangerous. Coupled with the philosophy that our society is medicine-driven, self-medicating at such an early age can set a dangerous precedent.

- ▶ In 2013, America's poison centers managed over 250,000 exposure cases involving children ages 6 to 19; over half of these cases involved medication errors and misuse.
- ▶ Medicine errors and misuse of OTC medications result in approximately 10,000 ER visits for kids under 18 each year.

If not equipped with the knowledge and training to make safe choices, children and young people can make mistakes, and that is where you come in!

Coalitions address their community's greatest challenges, from combatting drug abuse to preventing underage drinking. *OTC Medicine Safety*, a program created by the American Association of Poison Control Centers and Scholastic, with support from McNeil Consumer Healthcare, provides an opportunity for you to be proactive. This program raises awareness about the safe use of OTC medicine and offers resources to better equip educators, school nurses, and families with knowledge about OTC medicines and responsible use. Its goal is to influence behavior before children start self-medicating.

## Program Overview



### Early Education + Prevention = Better Outcomes

Does this formula sound familiar? That's because as prevention practitioners, we know that the earlier children are educated about OTC medicine safe use, the better the possibility that they could practice safe medicine-taking behaviors later on. Additionally, teaching children and families about OTC medicine safety can lead to respecting the importance of using all medicines—both OTC and prescription—in a safe manner. The *OTC Medicine Safety* program materials present these medicine safe use messages in a variety of ways. It is a comprehensive program for fifth- and sixth-grade educators and parents that combines assessment quizzes, interactive lesson plans, student printables, and at-home resources. It offers materials for teachers, school nurses, and families/caregivers. Here is a snapshot of the program.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



## OTC Medicine Safety Snapshot

### GOAL

Raise awareness about OTC medicine safe use so children and young people adopt responsible medicine-taking behaviors.



### BY...

Acknowledging that children as young as 11 to 12 years old are consistently becoming more responsible for taking their own medicines.



### AND...

Supplying age-appropriate messages and interactive lessons and activities that reinforce the importance of medicine safety.



### AND...

Providing resources to better equip educators, school nurses, community leaders, and families so they can educate and inform tweens about appropriate medicine-taking behaviors.



### MESSAGING...

#### Tween lessons

- ▶ 1. How to read medicine directions.
- ▶ 2. Follow label directions.
- ▶ 3. Properly measure medications.
- ▶ 4. Safely store medications away from younger children.
- ▶ 5. Consult with a parent or trusted adult before taking medications.



### RESULTS...

Facilitate conversations about OTC safe use, and healthy medicine adherence practices to create a more responsible medicine-taking generation.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## OTC Medicine Safety for Families



### About the Program

To be disseminated through the schools to parents and caregivers, the program asks, “Did you know that there may be over-the-counter medicine dangers in your home that could harm your children?” In response, *OTC Medicine Safety* helps families learn why it is important to inspect the home for OTC medicine hazards and assists them in acquiring skills to make the home medicine-safe for the entire family.

- ▶ **A. *OTC Medicine Safety for Families*:** Introduces the *OTC Medicine Safety* program for families newsletter, informational sheets and at-home activities, the medicine safety checklist, and more. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/parents/index.htm](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/parents/index.htm)
- ▶ **B. *Medicine Safety for Families Newsletter*:** Contains What’s on the Label?—a visual of how to read the medicine bottle plus useful medicine facts—and What’s Your Family’s Medicine Action Plan?—a checklist that will help families “medicine safety-proof” their homes. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/family/Newsletter\\_English.pdf](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/family/Newsletter_English.pdf)
- ▶ **C. *OTC Medicine Safety Family Resources*:** Helps families better understand OTC medicine safety, dosing, responsible usage, and the *Drug Facts* label. Contains four resource sheets: Read the Label First, Know Your Dose, Storage and Disposal, and OTC Medicine Misuse. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/family/ResourceSheets\\_English.pdf](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/family/ResourceSheets_English.pdf)
- ▶ **D. Digital Flipbook—“The Perfect Project”:** In this original story, Asha and her friends Rebecca and Nicky team up to plan an awesome science fair project. Along the way, they find themselves making surprising choices about science and medicine safety. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfbook/](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfbook/)
- ▶ **E. *Hidden Home Hazards*:** Teaches children about the importance of storing and disposing of OTC medicines through a fun, interactive learning activity. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/hazards/](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/hazards/)



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## OTC Medicine Safety for Teachers



### About the Program

In offering a critical approach to educating fifth- and sixth-grade students about medicine safety, *OTC Medicine Safety* includes resources and engaging educational activities specifically designed for parents and teachers of tweens to increase knowledge of OTC safety and responsibility.

- ▶ **A. OTC Medicine Safety for Teachers:** Introduces lessons and quizzes, educator resources, a digital flipbook, whiteboard images to support lessons, and more. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/teachers](http://scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/teachers)
- ▶ **B. OTC Medicine Safety Teacher's Guide:** Defines what OTC medicine safety means, provides learning outcomes and standards, and supplies resources and strategies on how to engage families and students. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/teachers/TeacherGuide.pdf](http://scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/teachers/TeacherGuide.pdf)
- ▶ **C. Understanding the Drug Facts Label (poster):** Teaches students how to read a *Drug Facts* label. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/DrugFactsPoster.pdf](http://scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/DrugFactsPoster.pdf)
- ▶ **D. Lessons and Quizzes:** Includes student pre- and post-assessments and lessons on All About Medicines, Understanding the *Drug Facts* Label, Medicine Measuring Tools, and Storage and Medicine Misuse. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/teachers](http://scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/teachers)
- ▶ **E. Culminating Activities for Students:** Provides true-to-life scenarios for students to practice what they have learned about medicine safety. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/teachers/Lesson4/CulminatingActivities.pdf](http://scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/teachers/Lesson4/CulminatingActivities.pdf)
- ▶ **F. Whiteboard Images to Support Lessons:** Provides images on drug facts, dosage, and safety. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/teachers](http://scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/teachers)



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## OTC Medicine Safety for School Nurses



### About the Program

School nurses have ample opportunities to engage students in teachable moments, from the time students walk into their offices. Empowering school nurses with the task of educating students and their families about the importance of medicine safety makes sense. *OTC Medicine Safety* for School Nurses makes this task easy because it packages the program, ensuring its relevance to school nurses.

- ▶ **A. *OTC Medicine Safety* for School Nurses** introduces the newsletter, What's on the Label? mini-poster, and more. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/nurses/](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/nurses/)
- ▶ **B. *OTC Medicine Safety* for School Nurses Newsletter** contains the following: What's on the Label?, The Household OTC Medicine Checklist, and 5 Safety Tips about *OTC Medicine Safety*. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/nurses/Nurse\\_Miniposter\\_Back.pdf](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/nurses/Nurse_Miniposter_Back.pdf)
- ▶ **C. What's on the Label? (Mini-Poster)** defines each of the sections on the *Drug Facts* label so users can learn proper medicine-taking practices, warnings, precautions, potential side effects, and more. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/nurses/Nurse\\_Miniposter\\_Front.pdf](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/pdfs/nurses/Nurse_Miniposter_Front.pdf)
- ▶ **D. Additional Resources** supplies links to materials targeting families and teachers. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/)



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## OTC Medicine Safety Q&A



Coalition leaders were introduced to the *OTC Medicine Safety* program during CADCA's 24th National Leadership Forum in February 2014. The following questions and answers, generated during a workshop that featured this program, will help to position the materials into coalition programs and activities.

- ▶ **Q. Did you know that some students are selling OTC medicines so they can buy marijuana? How can we educate students about why this practice is dangerous?**  
**A.** We need to acknowledge that marijuana is edging into the dialogue. It is essential that we position the selling of OTC medicine to obtain other drugs as abuse and misuse. The message? "OTC medicines can be dangerous if misused, regardless of whether the seller is actively abusing. Selling these medicines to purchase drugs, including marijuana, can lead to terrible consequences."
  
- ▶ **Q. Does this program support Common Core State Standards for health education?**  
**A.** *OTC Medicine Safety* supports the Common Core State Standards and is meant to supplement the lessons in current middle school classes.
  
- ▶ **Q. Will there be a program targeting high school students?**  
**A.** Although discussed, a high school program is currently not available. Check back with CADCA to confirm the status of this idea.
  
- ▶ **Q. This program seems to be targeted to teachers. Can anyone teach it?**  
**A.** Anyone can teach this program. New resources and tools supporting the program in and out of school settings are now available.
  
- ▶ **Q. How long does it take to teach *OTC Medicine Safety*?**  
**A.** Each lesson plan was designed to take one class period (approximately 40 minutes). There are four lessons in the *OTC Medicine Safety* program.
  
- ▶ **Q. What happens if teachers want to teach a few of the components and not all of them?**  
**A.** This practice is fine. The program's organization allows for flexibility.
  
- ▶ **Q. How can I obtain a copy of the *OTC Medicine Safety* program?**  
**A.** You can access it directly online at [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/](http://scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/).





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## The Logic Model, Seven Strategies for Community Change, and OTC Medicine Safety

### **OTC Medicine Safety Logic Model**

Integrating the *OTC Medicine Safety* program gives you the opportunity to be proactively involved in educating your community about the importance of this issue. Indeed, engaging your community around OTC medicine safety is an important investment. Take a look at the following Logic Model to obtain a high-level view of how OTC medicine safety neatly fits into your programmatic structure.

#### **THEORY OF CHANGE**

When coalitions educate the community about OTC medicine safe use, they help to create a healthier, responsible generation that is medicine-savvy and medicine-safe.

*OTC Medicine Safety* could neatly fit into your programmatic structure.



#### **PROBLEM**

- ▶ Tweens are self-medicating without adult supervision.
- ▶ Thousands of children and teens each year experience health-related problems due to OTC medicine self-administration, misuse, and abuse.
- ▶ There is a lack of knowledge around the safe use of OTC medicines among tweens.



#### **STRATEGIES**

- ▶ Confirm the status of health-related challenges associated with tween and teen OTC medicine use.
- ▶ Integrate age-appropriate messages and interactive lessons and activities that reinforce the importance of OTC medicine safe use.
- ▶ Make the connection between OTC medicine safe use and misuse/abuse prevention.





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Raise awareness about OTC medicine safe use.
- ▶ Engage educators, school nurses, pharmacists, healthcare professionals, public health educators, parents and guardians, older teens, young adults, and tweens.
- ▶ Provide tweens with concrete instructions on what they need to learn to become responsible medicating adults.



## OUTCOMES

- ▶ An increased percentage of middle schools adopting an *OTC Medicine Safety* module as part of the health program.
- ▶ An increase in the percentage of tweens who can correctly read and understand a *Drug Facts* label.
- ▶ Establishment of appropriate attitudes and behaviors pertaining to the safe use of OTC medicines.
- ▶ Decrease in the number of ER visits and Poison Control Center calls related to OTC medicine misuse or overdose.

## Implementation Ideas

### CADCA's Seven Strategies for Community Change and OTC Medicine Safety

CADCA's Seven Strategies for Community Change provides a platform for taking the *OTC Medicine Safety* program to the next level. Visit the following strategies to discover adaptable messages and methods. These documents can be used as planning tools; feel free to add ideas. Organizing strategies in this manner helps us acknowledge that the *OTC Medicine Safety* program is an important catalyst to discuss and address other forms of substance misuse and abuse. You will note that most of the messages and methods outlined here fall into the first two strategies.

- ▶ **Provide Information**
- ▶ **Enhance Skills**
- ▶ **Provide Support**
- ▶ **Enhance Access/Reduce Barriers**
- ▶ **Change Consequences**
- ▶ **Change Physical Design**
- ▶ **Modify/Change Policies**



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



## Strategy 1—Provide Information

- ▶ **Instructions:** Print this document and check off the messages and methods that are most relevant.
- ▶ **Vision:** Ensure that the community understands the importance of OTC medicine safety through consistent placement of this issue on your community’s radar.
- ▶ **Target audiences:** Tweens, families, educators/school nurses, and other community leaders.

### Tweens

#### Messages

- ▶ OTC medicines can be purchased off the shelf in a drug or grocery store without a doctor’s prescription. When taken as directed, OTC medicines are generally safe, but when taken incorrectly, they can be dangerous.
- ▶ You are becoming a responsible adult and taking medicines—whether they are OTC or prescription—is an important part of growing up. Always:
  - ▶ READ and FOLLOW label directions on medicine bottles each and every time.
  - ▶ FOLLOW dosing directions.
  - ▶ PROPERLY MEASURE medicines with the measuring device that comes with the medicine.
  - ▶ SAFELY STORE medicine away from younger children.
  - ▶ CONSULT with a parent or trusted adult before taking medicines.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## Methods

- ▶ Recruit student ambassadors who agree to be part of your information dissemination team, and reward them for their participation.
- ▶ Encourage students to create and display posters, messages, and other materials.
- ▶ Launch a video production contest, asking students to create videos that portray the importance of OTC medicine safe use. Post the videos through social media and on school and coalition websites.
- ▶ Collaborate with tweens on creating social media campaigns, utilizing YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and Vine.
- ▶ Promote youth-generated radio and television Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

## Families

### Messages

- ▶ With cold and flu and spring or summer allergy seasons approaching, parents and guardians should teach their tweens about OTC medicine safety.
- ▶ You can help create a responsible generation. Make sure that they *and* you:
  - ▶ READ and FOLLOW the *Drug Facts* label each and every time.
  - ▶ IDENTIFY the active ingredients in all medicines, and do not use two medicines with the same active ingredients.
  - ▶ KNOW the dose, and properly measure each dose with the measuring device that comes with the medicine. Regular teaspoons or tablespoons are not the same as these devices!
  - ▶ ASK a pharmacist, nurse, or doctor if you have questions about OTC medicine.
  - ▶ STORE OTC medicines (including medicines, vitamins, and supplements) up and away from children after every use.
  - ▶ ENSURE that child-safety caps are locked on all medicines.
  - ▶ REMIND visitors to keep luggage, pocketbooks, or anything else that might have medicines in them out of children's reach and sight.
  - ▶ ENCOURAGE your tweens to consult with a parent or trusted adult before they take any medicines.

### Methods

- ▶ Encourage adult family members to program the Poison Help phone number into their phones: 1-800-222-1222.
- ▶ Create and disseminate flyers for distribution at venues frequented by adult family members.
- ▶ Collaborate with local employers, asking them to incorporate OTC medicine safe use into employee orientations, brown-bag lunch events, and health fairs. Encourage employers to insert flyers into employee mailboxes (virtual and in-office). Coordinate this outreach during targeted times of the year.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

- ▶ Always include OTC medicines in your promotional materials when you describe how medicines should be safely stored and discarded.
- ▶ Teach parents how to read and follow the *Drug Facts* label.
- ▶ Offer to implement OTC medicine safe use presentations using this program.
- ▶ Create and disseminate OTC medicine safety information in different languages, and provide language interpretation/translation during workshops and other training events.

## Educators/School Nurses

### Messages

- ▶ OTC medicine safety means being knowledgeable about the medicines we buy off the shelf without a doctor's prescription. It also means arming ourselves, the students we teach, and their families with the tools and resources to help keep everyone safe.
- ▶ When it comes to OTC medicines, did you know that some of your students may be self-medicating? Help keep them safe by giving them the information and tools they need to take medicines if adults are not available to help them.
- ▶ Teaching students about OTC medicine safety NOW can translate into appropriate medicine-taking behaviors LATER.

### Methods

- ▶ In collaboration with your school partners, use this *OTC Medicine Safety* program as a springboard to help ensure safe medicine-taking practices for a lifetime.
- ▶ Facilitate the development of poster contests and other activities that actively engage students in learning about the importance of medicine safety.
- ▶ Ensure that the *OTC Medicine Safety* program and supporting materials are being used by schools in your community.

## Community Leaders

*Include dentists, pediatricians, emergency room doctors, pharmacists, youth group leaders, student advisors, and extended family members in your planning and outreach activities—virtually anyone who comes in contact with tweens and their families could be targeted!*

### Messages

- ▶ By the time teens reach age 16, about 90 percent say they've taken OTC medicine without adult supervision. Many start doing this when they're only 11 or 12 years old!
- ▶ From firefighters and pharmacists to doctors and youth group leaders, we all can play an important role in educating tweens and their families about OTC medicine safety.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

- ▶ Five facts to remember when it comes to OTC medicine safety:
  - ▶ READ and FOLLOW label directions on medicine bottles each and every time.
  - ▶ FOLLOW dosing directions.
  - ▶ PROPERLY MEASURE medicines with the measuring device that comes with the medicine.
  - ▶ SAFELY STORE medicine away from younger children.
  - ▶ CONSULT with a parent or trusted adult before taking medicines.

## Methods

- ▶ Pitch your coalition's involvement in OTC medicine safety to the press, including radio, TV, talk shows, local newspapers, and social media.
- ▶ Write articles and opinion editorials about the importance of OTC medicine safety and place them in community bulletins, local newspapers, and other publications (virtual and print).
- ▶ Incorporate OTC medicine safety messaging into blogs, and Facebook and Twitter posts.
- ▶ Produce PSAs and disseminate them through traditional media outlets, doctors' offices, clinics, and websites. See Spread the Word for examples.
- ▶ Collaborate with healthcare providers, pharmacists, and community service organizations, encouraging them to embrace OTC medicine safety as one of their issues.
- ▶ Regularly post flyers and posters in stores, libraries, places of worship, and other locations frequented by tweens and their families.
- ▶ Strategically promote OTC medicine safety when OTC medicines are more likely used—changes of the seasons—as well as during:
  - ▶ National Take-Back Events: September
  - ▶ National Recovery Month: September
  - ▶ Family Day: September
  - ▶ National Suicide Prevention Week: September
  - ▶ National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month: October
  - ▶ Talk About Your Medicines Month: October
  - ▶ National Red Ribbon Week: October
  - ▶ Poison Prevention Week: March
  - ▶ National Prevention Week: May
  - ▶ National Safety Month: June
  - ▶ Community-wide events (walkathons, town hall meetings, cultural fairs, etc.)
- ▶ Collaborate with nearby community coalitions, and engage them in discussions about OTC medicine safety.
- ▶ Become active participants on community-wide event-planning committees to help ensure an *OTC Medicine Safety* presence at events.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



## Strategy 2—Enhance Skills

- ▶ **Instructions:** Print this document and check off the messages and activities that are most relevant.
- ▶ **Vision:** Create workshops, seminars, and other activities to increase participant skill levels. Build positive social and decision-making capabilities.
- ▶ **Target audiences:** Tweens, families, and community leaders.

### Tweens

#### Messages

- ▶ Practice these steps if you are going to be self-medicating:
  - ▶ READ and FOLLOW label directions on medicine bottles each and every time.
  - ▶ FOLLOW dosing directions.
  - ▶ PROPERLY MEASURE medicines with the measuring device that comes with the medicine.
  - ▶ SAFELY STORE medicines away from younger children.
  - ▶ CONSULT with a parent or trusted adult before taking medicines.
- ▶ Adhering to OTC medicine safety practices TODAY can help protect you for a lifetime.

#### Methods

- ▶ Collaborate with after-school programs, local pharmacists, and youth-serving organizations on conducting workshops that teach tweens about OTC self-medicating etiquette.
- ▶ Create and disseminate a card that displays the steps for self-medicating.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## Families

### Messages

- ▶ Adult caregivers—parents and guardians—are responsible for keeping their children safe from harm. This includes knowing the facts about OTC medicine safety.
- ▶ Always remember these five important strategies when using OTC medicines:
  - ▶ READ and FOLLOW label directions on medicine bottles each and every time.
  - ▶ FOLLOW dosing directions.
  - ▶ PROPERLY MEASURE medicines with the measuring device that comes with the medicine.
  - ▶ SAFELY STORE medicines away from younger children.
  - ▶ CONSULT with a pharmacist or other healthcare professional if you have questions.

### Methods

- ▶ Incorporate OTC medicine safety into parenting and workplace wellness classes.
- ▶ Ensure that those who come into contact with families, i.e., doctors, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, and government service agencies, have flyers that explain the importance of teaching families and children about OTC medicine safety.
- ▶ Always include the 1-800-222-1222 Poison Help hotline in all materials.

## Community Leaders

*Include dentists, pediatricians, emergency room doctors, pharmacists, youth group leaders, student advisors, and extended family members in your planning and outreach activities—virtually anyone who comes in contact with tweens and their families could be targeted!*

### Messages

- ▶ We all have a stake in teaching our children healthy and safe OTC medicine-taking practices.
- ▶ Teaching young people these skills can protect them from future harm.

### Methods

- ▶ Create and offer a five-minute OTC medicine safety pitch and infographic to be inserted into briefings, in-service training activities, and local board of pharmacists and medical association meetings.
- ▶ Provide targeted training to healthcare professionals who work with tweens (e.g., pediatricians, dentists, orthodontists, allergists, school nurses, and social workers). Integrate the *OTC Medicine Safety* program as the jumping-off point.
- ▶ Collaborate with local medical and pharmacy schools, other healthcare training institutions, law enforcement and emergency response departments, hospitals, and clinics to ensure that OTC medicine safety is on their radar. Deliver *OTC Medicine Safety* modules as requested.
- ▶ Always include the 1-800-222-1222 Poison Help hotline in all materials.





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



## Strategy 3—Provide Support

- ▶ **Instructions:** Print out this document and check off the messages and methods that are most relevant.
- ▶ **Vision:** Reduce risk or enhance protection against OTC medicine misuse and abuse, as well as the potential for prescription and other forms of drug abuse.
- ▶ **Target audiences:** All audiences, but specifically parents and healthcare professionals including pharmacists, nursing assistants, nurses, and physicians.

### Messages

- ▶ We live in a nation that is defined as having “a pill for every ill.” Not every ailment needs medicines!
- ▶ Being able to effectively read and follow a *Drug Facts* label is an important skill to becoming medicine-savvy and safe.
- ▶ If you’re a patient, don’t be afraid to ask questions about a medicine that you are taking, and if you are a healthcare provider, be ready to answer consumer questions about OTC and prescription medicines.
- ▶ Reducing the risk of OTC medicine abuse is important.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## Methods

- ▶ Collaborate with local pharmacy schools and your community's pharmacists to initiate training programs on OTC medicine safety that target teachers, school nurses, families, and students.
- ▶ Use the workplace to educate adults and parents about the importance of OTC medicine safe use, storage, and disposal practices.
- ▶ Provide information about the *OTC Medicine Safety* program to pharmacy and nursing assistant training programs and medical schools.
- ▶ Supply pharmacies, doctors' offices, and clinics with fact sheets, posters, Poison Help stickers, and other materials that can be disseminated to consumers.
- ▶ Confirm if prevention messages or the Poison Help phone number can be placed on pharmacy HIPPA sign-off machines so that when consumers sign for their medicine, they are reminded to always read and follow the label.
- ▶ Create and promote OTC Sting Operations where students attempt to purchase selected OTC medicines (those that contain dextromethorphan) at grocery stores and pharmacies. Use these opportunities to educate consumers and store staff about the importance of medicine safety.





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## Strategy 4—Enhance Access/Reduce Barriers

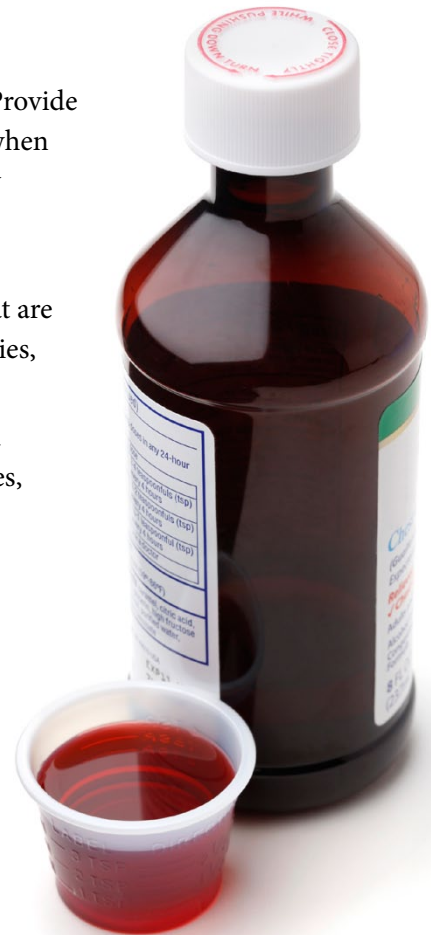
- ▶ **Instructions:** Print out this document and check off the messages and methods that are most relevant.
- ▶ **Vision:** Improve systems and processes to increase safe access to OTC medicine safety.
- ▶ **Vision:** All audiences, but specifically retail stores, healthcare professionals, law enforcement officials, educators, and public health officials.

### Messages

- ▶ Community drug take-back events are great strategies to discard unused medicines, including those that are obtained without a prescription.
- ▶ OTC medicine should be stored up and away from young children. Lockboxes are for OTC medicines, too!

### Methods

- ▶ Ensure that OTC medicines are included in drug take-back events. Provide information to consumers on how to safely dispose of medications when take-back events are not available or accessible. Collaborate with law enforcement personnel and healthcare professionals on creating community-specific drug disposal programs.
- ▶ Help ensure that drug take-back events are launched in locations that are frequented by residents, e.g., city parks, local farmers markets, libraries, and large retail department stores.
- ▶ Promote drug take-back events through local businesses, doctor and dentist offices, emergency clinics, hospital emergency rooms, libraries, and community centers.
- ▶ Recruit new partners to become collection sites, and help promote their use.
- ▶ Provide training on proper storage and liability.
- ▶ Consider innovative ways to collect unused or expired medicines, including the postal service, UPS, or FedEx.
- ▶ Generate and distribute Poison Help stickers (1-800-222-1222) through your partner networks. Stickers could be strategically placed on clinic scales, patient sign-in clipboards, and appointment cards.





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



## Strategy 5—Change Consequences

- ▶ **Instructions:** Print this document and check off the messages and methods that are most relevant.
- ▶ **Vision:** Applaud the efforts of those actively engaged in OTC medicine safety, recognizing that the power of positive influence is contagious. This strategy involves changing behaviors through supporting the use of incentives and positive consequences such as recognition, discounts, coupons, and rewards that encourage people to engage in specific positive behaviors and strategies, and disincentives and negative consequences such as fines, citations, loss of privileges, and revocations. For this topic, we're focusing on the positive!
- ▶ **Target audiences:** Retail operations, businesses, pharmacists, doctors, law enforcement officials, educators, and nurses.

### Messages

- ▶ Your role is key to helping consumers and patients understand that OTC medicines need to be treated with as much care and respect as prescription medicines.
- ▶ Teach members of your community how to practice OTC medicine safety.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## Methods

- ▶ Survey your current partners to verify the presence of information on OTC medicine safe use within their drug-free workplace programs.
- ▶ Recognize your partners for being active players in supporting OTC medicine safety through special breakfasts, lunches, or press conferences
  - ▶ Distribute commemorative plaques, ribbons, certificates, and other items.
  - ▶ Promote their accomplishments through local newspapers, television and radio stations, and social media channels.
  - ▶ Coordinate with National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month, National Recovery Month, National Drug Take-Back events, and other local activities.
- ▶ Collaborate with healthcare professional associations on recognizing members who regularly discuss OTC medicine safe use and prescription drug abuse prevention and intervention strategies with their patients.





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



## Strategy 6—Change Physical Design

- ▶ **Instructions:** Print this document and check off the messages and methods that are most relevant.
- ▶ **Vision:** Safeguard OTC medicines and keep them above and away from young children.
- ▶ **Target audiences:** All audiences, but specifically tweens, parents and guardians, law enforcement officers, healthcare professionals, educators, home builders, youth-service professionals, businesses, and program policy makers.

### Messages

- ▶ Protect your OTC medicines just like you do prescription medications to help ensure that they will not be abused or misused.

### Methods

- ▶ Launch, support, and encourage Lock Your Meds™ campaigns, drug take-back programs, and other related initiatives, and consider disseminating free medication lockboxes during National Take-Back events and all year round.
- ▶ Collaborate with local builders on creating safe boxes so residents have the option of safeguarding all of their medicines.
- ▶ Provide briefings to local law enforcement agencies about the importance of OTC safe medicine use. Make sure they:
  - ▶ Know the signs and symptoms of abuse and the connection with OTC medicine abuse and prescription and other forms of substance misuse and abuse.
  - ▶ Use interventions to provide wake-up calls to tweens and their families.
  - ▶ Refer affected families to appropriate healthcare professionals.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



## Strategy 7—Modify and Change Policies

- ▶ **Instructions:** Print this document and check off the messages and methods that are most relevant.
- ▶ **Vision:** Support formal changes in written policies, laws, and procedures. Examples include workplace initiatives, law enforcement procedures and practices, and public-policy actions and systems change within government, communities, and organizations.
- ▶ **Target audiences:** Education agencies, trade associations, employers, and others involved in setting program priorities.

### Messages

- ▶ OTC medicines provide significant contributions to helping us feel better and healthy. Teaching tweens, their parents, and the community about safe use strategies is therefore important.
- ▶ Adhering to proper OTC medicine-taking practices and storage and disposal strategies early and often pave the way to healthy adulthood.

### Methods

- ▶ Collaborate with the local and state departments of education to promote the inclusion of OTC medicine safety in the health program, with particular emphasis on targeting 5th and 6th graders.
- ▶ Support practices that reward healthcare professionals for supporting OTC medicine safety.
- ▶ Support the creation of multiple Drug Take-Back events and/or the use of permanent drug drop boxes.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## Expand your Reach

The messages and methods provided in this section present concrete ideas on how to reach target audiences. Here are some strategies to help you expand your reach—the “where” in the equation. Use this form to get community-specific. Define where the *OTC Medicine Safety* program can be integrated in your community. In the third column below, add organizations and contact information.

Target audiences	Venue	Personalize — Where can <i>OTC Medicine Safety</i> be Integrated in YOUR Community?
Twins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs</li> <li>▶ Schools</li> <li>▶ After-school programs</li> <li>▶ Houses of worship (churches, synagogues, mosques) youth groups</li> <li>▶ Before/after-school care programs</li> </ul>	
Educators (Teachers) and School Nurses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Public and private schools</li> <li>▶ After-school clubs</li> <li>▶ Colleges and university teacher training and nursing programs</li> <li>▶ Continuing education programs for teachers and school nurses</li> </ul>	
Community Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Community service organizations (Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Club International, Knights of Columbus, Rotary International, Red Hats)</li> <li>▶ National organizations with local affiliates (National Safety Council, National Council of La Raza, Big Brother, Big Sister)</li> <li>▶ Federal programs that serve youth (Americorp, Job Corp)</li> <li>▶ Local PTAs</li> <li>▶ Houses of worship adult organizations — Sisterhoods and Brotherhoods</li> </ul>	
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Drug Take-Back and other health-related community events</li> <li>▶ Pediatricians' offices</li> <li>▶ Emergency and community healthcare centers</li> <li>▶ Hospital emergency rooms</li> </ul>	





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

LEARNING ABOUT THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF MEDICINES



# Why Is OTC Medicine Safety Important?

Approximately 50% of adolescents begin to self-medicate as early as age 11.

10,000 ER visits per year for persons younger than 18 are caused by medicine errors and misuse of OTC medications.

**KNOW THE FACTS:**

**OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY**

**FOR TEENS & TWEENS**

The majority of adolescents begin to self-medicate with OTC medicines between 11-12 years old.

By age 16, approximately **90%** of adolescents report self-administering OTC medications

**UNSUPERVISED SELF-ADMINISTRATION CAN LEAD TO INCORRECT USE IN INDIVIDUALS UNDER THE AGE OF 18**

Medicine errors and misuse of OTC medications result in approximately **10,000 ER visits for kids under 18 each year.**<sup>1</sup>

In 2013, America's poison centers managed over **250,000 exposure cases** involving children ages 6 to 19; over half of these cases involved medication errors and misuse.<sup>2</sup>

**These incidents are preventable**

**A BIG PART OF THE SOLUTION IS EDUCATION**

Remember to always use the dosing device that comes with the medicine

Be sure to read & follow the **Drug Facts** label every time

Take only one medicine at a time with the same active ingredient

Store all drugs up & away & out of reach & sight

Program the Poison Help Number into your phone: 1-800-222-1222

**This and other resources are available for free: [www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](http://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)**

The OTC Medicine Safety program is an educational campaign to raise awareness about over-the-counter medicine safety and is sponsored by Scholastic and the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

<sup>1</sup> Cheryl Abel, Kent Johnson, Dustin Walker, Maha Abdalla, and Carol Ann W. Goldsmith. Non-prescription Medication Use and Literacy Among New Hampshire Eighth Graders. Journal of the American Pharmacists Association. 2012; 777-787.  
<sup>2</sup> Scillito, Sarah F. et al. Medication Overdoses Leading to Emergency Department Visits Among Children. 2009. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Volume 37, Issue 3, 161-167. Albany, NY, Springer, CA, California, U.S.A., Baley, J.C., Ford M. 2012. Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System (NPDS), 30th Annual Report. Ch. Toxicol (Phila). 2013 Dec; 51(12): 949-1029.

# Medicines Are Drugs



A medicine is also called a **drug**...

# Who Has Used an Over-the-Counter Medicine This Week?



**What are some reasons for using an OTC medicine?**



**How are they different?**

**How are they the same?**

# Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicines

## How are they different? How are they the same?

Prescription	Both types of medicine:	Over-the-Counter
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Prescribed by a doctor for one person</li><li>2. Bought at a pharmacy and dispensed by a pharmacist</li><li>3. Used by only one person in a family—the person it's prescribed for</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The medicine label, including the directions, should be read and followed carefully before use</li><li>2. Children should use only with permission of a parent or trusted adult</li><li>3. A healthcare professional or the poison center can answer questions about this medicine</li><li>4. Dangerous to misuse or abuse</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Can buy without a doctor's prescription</li><li>2. Bought off the shelf in store or pharmacy aisles</li><li>3. May be used by more than one person in a family for the same symptom or problem</li></ol>

# How do you decide which OTC medicine is right for you?



Read the  
*Drug Facts*  
label.

<b>Drug Facts</b>	
<b>Active ingredients</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Medicine 100 mg .....	cough suppressant
Medicine 150 mg .....	nasal decongestant
<b>Uses</b> Temporarily relieves:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation</li> <li>■ nasal congestion</li> </ul>	
<b>Warnings</b>	
<b>Do not use</b> if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.	
<b>Ask a doctor before use if you have</b> liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.	
<b>When using this product</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ you may get drowsy</li> <li>■ be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery</li> <li>■ excitability may occur, especially in children</li> </ul>	
<b>Stop use and seek medical help</b> right away if allergic reaction occurs.	
<b>Keep out of reach of children.</b> In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.	
<b>Directions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.</li> </ul>	
Age	Dose
adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period
children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period
children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor
<b>Other information</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ store at 20°–25°C (68°–77°F)     ■ keep dry</li> </ul>	
<b>Inactive ingredients</b>	
anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no.10	
<b>Questions or comments?</b>	
Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.	

All OTC medicines have a *Drug Facts* label.

# What's on the Label?

## THE DRUG FACTS LABEL

Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely.

### WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.

**Drug Facts**

Active ingredients: Medicine 100 mg, Medicine 150 mg

Purpose: cough suppressant, nasal decongestant

**Uses** Temporarily relieves: coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation, nasal congestion

**Warnings**

Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.

Ask a doctor before use if you have liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.

When using this product: you may get drowsy, be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery, excitability may occur, especially in children.

Stop use and seek medical help right away if allergic reaction occurs.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

**Directions**

Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.

Age	Dose
adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in 24-hour period
children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in 24-hour period
children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor

**Other information**

store at 20°–25°C (68°–77°F) keep dry

**Inactive ingredients** anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, malloxtrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no. 10

**Questions or comments?** Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

**OTC MEDICINE FACTS**

- Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
- Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
- Always use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
- Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same active ingredient.
- All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up, away, and out of sight after every use.

**ASK FOR HELP**

Poison centers are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential. Save the Poison Help number in your phone: **1-800-222-1222**

**POISON HELP**  
1-800-222-1222  
A.A.P.C.C.



**Question**—What could happen if you only read part of the directions on a test? Or in a recipe?



# What's on the Label?

**USES:**  
Describes the symptoms that the medicine treats.

## WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

*Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.*

**Drug Facts**

Active ingredients	Purpose
Medicine 100 mg	cough suppressant
Medicine 150 mg	nasal decongestant

**Uses** Temporarily relieves:

- coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation
- nasal congestion

**Warnings**

Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.

Ask a doctor before use if you have liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.

**When using this product**

- you may get drowsy
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

Stop use and seek medical help right away if allergic reaction occurs.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

**Directions**

- Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.


Age	Dose
adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period
children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period
children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor

**Other information**

- store at 20°-25°C (68°-77°F)      ■ keep dry

**Inactive ingredients**  
anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no. 10

**Questions or comments?**  
Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.



The **Active ingredients** section of the label tells you the names of the active ingredients in the medicine and what jobs they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress cough). Some medicines may have more than one active ingredient.

In the **Other information** section of the label you'll find other things you need to know, such as how to store the medicine.


You'll find a list of any preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms in the **Inactive ingredients** section of the Drug Facts label. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

**OTC MEDICINE FACTS**

1. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
2. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
3. Always use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
4. Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same active ingredient.
5. All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up, away, and out of sight after every use.

**ASK FOR HELP**

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Save the Poison Help number in your phone:  
**1-800-222-1222**



This is not an actual Drug Facts label.

# What's on the Label?

**WARNINGS:** Safety information including side effects, the questions you should ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and which medicines to avoid using at the same time.

## WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

*Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.*

**The Uses** section of the label tells you the symptoms the medicine treats.

Look in the **Warnings** section to learn about what other medicines you should not take with this medicine, the side effects this medicine can cause, when to ask a doctor before taking this medicine, and other important safety information such as when to stop taking the medicine and talk to a doctor.

The **Directions** section of the label tells you the amount of medicine (dose) you can take, how often you can take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

Some labels also have a **Questions or comments?** section that gives you the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

**Drug Facts**

Active ingredients	Purpose
Medicine 100 mg	cough suppressant
Medicine 150 mg	nasal decongestant

**Uses** Temporarily relieves:

- coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation
- nasal congestion

**Warnings**

Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.

Ask a doctor before use if you have liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.

**When using this product you may get drowsy**

- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

Stop use and seek medical help right away if allergic reaction occurs.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

**Directions**

- Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.

Age	Dose
adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period
children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period
children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor

**Other information**

- store at 20°-25°C (68°-77°F)
- keep dry

**Inactive ingredients**

anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no. 10

**Questions or comments?**

Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

The **Active ingredients** section of the label tells you the names of the active ingredients in the medicine and what jobs they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress cough). Some medicines may have more than one active ingredient.

In the **Other information** section of the label you'll find other things you need to know, such as how to store the medicine.

You'll find a list of any preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms in the **Inactive ingredients** section on the Drug Facts label. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

This is not an actual Drug Facts label.

### OTC MEDICINE FACTS

1. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
2. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
3. Always use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
4. Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same active ingredient.
5. All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up, away, and out of sight after every use.

**ASK FOR HELP**

Poison centers are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential. Save the Poison Help number in your phone:

1-800-222-1222

# What's on the Label?

## WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.



**Drug Facts**

<b>Active ingredients</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Medicine 100 mg	cough suppressant
Medicine 150 mg	nasal decongestant

**Uses** Temporarily relieves:

- coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation
- nasal congestion

**Warnings**

Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.

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**When using this product**

- you may get drowsy
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children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor

**Other information**

- store at 20°-25°C (68°-77°F)
- keep dry

**Inactive ingredients**

anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no.10

**Questions or comments?**

Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

The **Uses** section of the label tells you the symptoms the medicine treats.

Look in the **Warnings** section to learn about what other medicines you should not take with this medicine, the side effects this medicine can cause, when to ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and other important safety information such as when to stop taking the medicine and talk to a doctor.

The **Directions** section of the label tells you the amount of medicine (dose) you can take, how often you can take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

Some labels also have a **Questions or comments?** section that gives you the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

The **Active ingredients** section of the label tells you the names of the active ingredients in the medicine and what jobs they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress cough). Some medicines may have more than one active ingredient.

In the **Other information** section of the label you'll find other things you need to know, such as how to store the medicine.

You'll find a list of any preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms in the **inactive ingredients** section on the Drug Facts label. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

**ACTIVE INGREDIENTS:** The ingredients in the medicine that make it work.

There are **INACTIVE INGREDIENTS**, too. These ingredients are not intended to treat your symptoms (e.g., preservatives).

This is not an actual Drug Facts label.

### OTC MEDICINE FACTS

- Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
- Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
- Always use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
- Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same active ingredient.
- All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up, away, and out of sight after every use.



#### ASK FOR HELP

Poison centers are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential. Save the Poison Help number in your phone:

**1-800-222-1222**

# What's on the Label?

## WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.



**Drug Facts**

<b>Active ingredients</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Medicine 100 mg .....	cough suppressant
Medicine 150 mg .....	nasal decongestant

**Uses** Temporarily relieves:

- coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation
- nasal congestion

**Warnings**

Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.

Ask a doctor before use if you have liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.

**When using this product**

- you may get drowsy
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

Stop use and seek medical help right away if allergic reaction occurs.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

**Directions**

- Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.

Age	Dose
adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period
children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period
children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor

**Other information**

- store at 20°-25°C (68°-77°F)      ■ keep dry

**Inactive ingredients**

anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no.10

**Questions or comments?**

Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

The **Uses** section of the label tells you the symptoms the medicine treats.

Look in the **Warnings** section to learn about what other medicines you should not take with this medicine, the side effects this medicine can cause, when to ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and other important safety information such as when to stop taking the medicine and talk to a doctor.

The **Directions** section of the label tells you the amount of medicine (dose) you can take, how often you can take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

Some labels also have a **Questions or comments?** section that gives you the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

The **Active ingredients** section of the label tells you the names of the active ingredients in the medicine and what jobs they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress cough). Some medicines may have more than one active ingredient.

In the **Other information** section of the label you'll find other things you need to know, such as how to store the medicine.

You'll find a list of any preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms in the **Inactive ingredients** section on the Drug Facts label. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

**QUESTIONS or COMMENTS:**  
The phone number for the company that manufactures this medicine is listed here. Call the number if you have questions about the medicine.

**OTHER INFORMATION:**  
This section explains how to store the medicine. A bit later, we'll get into why **safe storage** is so important.

This is not an actual Drug Facts label.

### OTC MEDICINE FACTS

1. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
2. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
3. Always use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
4. Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same active ingredient.
5. All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up, away, and out of sight after every use.



#### ASK FOR HELP

Poison centers are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential. Save the Poison Help number in your phone:

**1-800-222-1222**

# What's on the Label?

## WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.



**Drug Facts**

<b>Active ingredients</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Medicine 100 mg	cough suppressant
Medicine 150 mg	nasal decongestant

**Uses** Temporarily relieves:

- coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation
- nasal congestion

**Warnings**

Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.

Ask a doctor before use if you have liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.

**When using this product**

- you may get drowsy
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

Stop use and seek medical help right away if allergic reaction occurs.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

**Directions**

- Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.

Age	Dose
adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period
children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period
children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor

**Other information**

- store at 20°-25°C (68°-77°F)
- keep dry

**Inactive ingredients**

anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no.10

**Questions or comments?**

Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

The **Uses** section of the label tells you the symptoms the medicine treats.

Look in the **Warnings** section to learn about what other medicines you should not take with this medicine, the side effects this medicine can cause, when to ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and other important safety information such as when to stop taking the medicine and talk to a doctor.

The **Directions** section of the label tells you the amount of medicine (dose) you can take, how often you can take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

Some labels also have a **Questions or comments?** section that gives you the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

The **Active ingredients** section of the label tells you the names of the active ingredients in the medicine and what jobs they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress cough). Some medicines may have more than one active ingredient.

In the **Other information** section of the label you'll find other things you need to know, such as how to store the medicine.

You'll find a list of any preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms in the **inactive ingredients** section on the Drug Facts label. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

**DIRECTIONS:** Indicates the amount or **dose** of medicine to take, how often to take it, and how much you can take in one day.

**AND REMEMBER:** Always use the dosing device that comes with the medicine. Dosing devices are customized to the medicine, and **SAFE** dosing is critical!

### OTC MEDICINE FACTS

1. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
2. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
3. Always use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
4. Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same active ingredient.
5. All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up, away, and out of sight after every use.



#### ASK FOR HELP

Poison centers are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential.

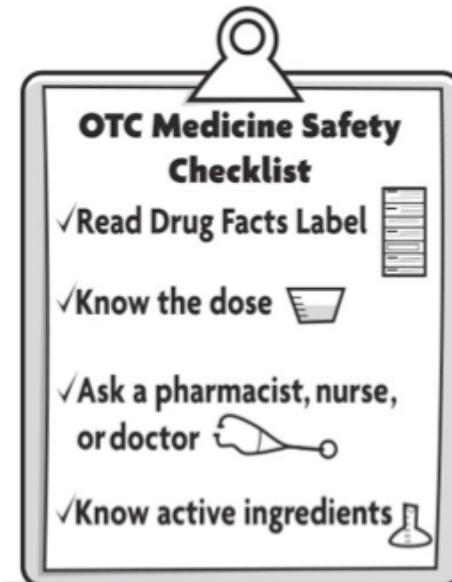
Save the Poison Help number in your phone:

**1-800-222-1222**

# Safe Dosing



**Have you used a household spoon to take medicine recently—or something OTHER than the dosage device that came with it?**

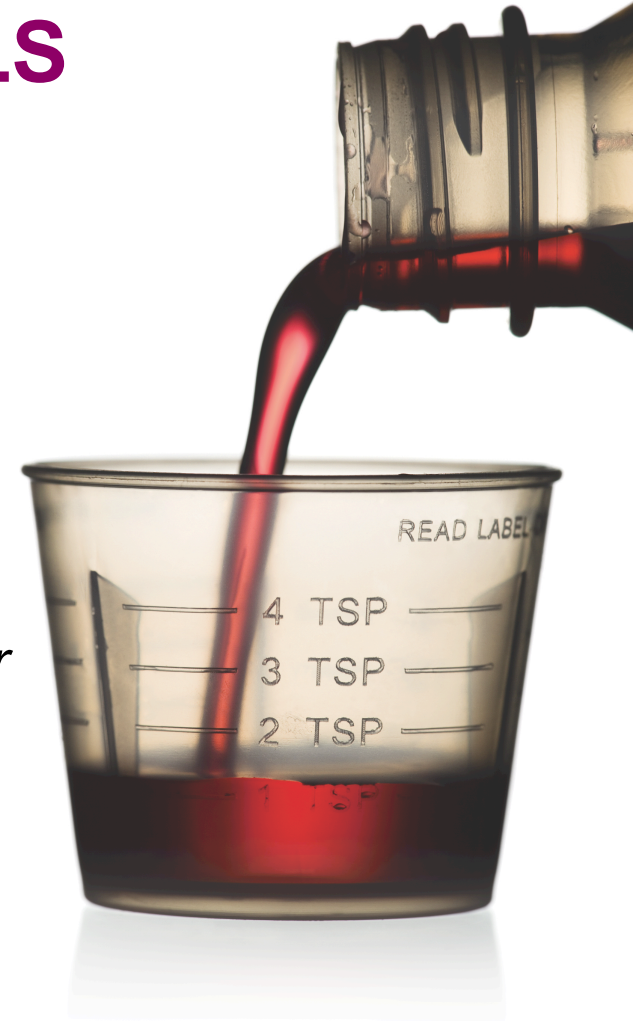


## MEDICINE MEASURING TOOLS

Why do medicines come with dosing devices?

*Because  
measurement is an  
exact science*

- All medicines should be dosed and used *under the supervision of a parent or a trusted adult.*
- Measure carefully—accuracy is important.
- When the recommended dose is not followed, medicines can cause harm.



# Safe Medicine Storage

Where does your family store medicine at home?

Are there rooms in your home where medicine is sometimes left in the sight and reach of children?

**SKILLS LEARNED:** critical thinking • reading informational text

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDENT WORKSHEET 5

Directions: Circle the six medicine storage errors in this picture. On the back of this sheet, describe safe storage solutions for the medicines pictured below to help make this home safer.



ANSWERS: 1. bottle of cough medicine on the counter and a teaspoon with trace of medicine visible on spoon (should be put up and away); 2. medicine left out on the nightstand with charge out of the top; 3. allergy medicine near to water; 4. bottle of cough medicine hanging low from door knob inside closet; 5. medicine bottle with water visible inside against below kitchen sink; 6. open purse with multiple medicine bottles sticking out of top.



## SAFE medicine storage is not as complicated as you may think.

### A few tips:

- Store medicine and vitamins up and away and out of the sight and reach of curious small children at home.
- Store medicine in its original container, and replace the cap tightly after administering medicine.
- Safely dispose of all expired medicines.

**SCHOLASTIC**

► Download other FREE resource sheets: [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents)

**FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #3 • STORAGE AND DISPOSAL**

## UP, AWAY, AND OUT OF SIGHT

### STORAGE SMARTS

Every year more than 500,000 parents and caregivers call poison control centers because a child got into medicine or was given the wrong dose of medicine. That's almost one call every minute of every day.

- **Tip #1:**  
To prevent medicine poisoning, store medicines up, away, and out of sight: When you're storing over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medicines and vitamins and supplements, select a spot that's high and out of the reach of children. Safe storage applies to both adult and children's medicines.
- **Tip #2:**  
Be aware of how and where children get into medicines: Kids get into medicines in many places, such as in purses and bags, or on counters or nightstands.
- **Tip #3:**  
Products like diaper rash remedies or eyedrops that you might not think of as medicine need to be stored safely, too: Most parents understand the importance of storing medicines up and away, but may not safely store products that they might not think of as medicines.
- **Tip #4:**  
When you have visitors, consider the medicines they might be bringing into the home: When you have guests, offer to secure any purses or bags they bring that may contain medicines.
- **Tip #5:**  
As soon as you've finished administering medicine, replace the cap tightly: Buy medicines with child-resistant packaging if possible, but remember, child-resistant does not mean childproof. Curious children may be able to get into medicine, so always return medicine to an up-and-away location after every use.
- **Tip #6:**  
Clean out your medicine cabinet: To learn about safe ways to dispose of your medicines, visit the Food and Drug Administration's guidelines for medicine disposal, read the Drug Enforcement Administration's information on the National Take-Back Initiative, or call your poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

**FACT:** In 86% of emergency room visits for medicine poisoning, the child gets into medicine belonging to an adult.\*

**FACT:** In 43% of cases, the medicine a child gets into belonged to a relative, such as an aunt, uncle, or grandparent.\*

**FACT:** In 67% of medicine poisoning cases, the medicine was within reach of a child, such as in a purse, left on a counter or dresser, or found on the ground.\*

More than **60,000** young children end up in emergency rooms every year because they get into medicines while their parent or caregiver is not looking.  
—SOURCE: [upandaway.org](http://upandaway.org)

**POISON Help**  
1-800-222-1222  
AAPCC

**ASK FOR HELP**  
Program the Poison Help Number  
Into Your Phone: 1-800-222-1222

Support for the development of this education material was provided by **McNeil** Consumer Healthcare

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\*SOURCE: SAFE KIDS Worldwide | [www.aafp.org/afp/161/10a/medication-safety-reporting.html](http://www.aafp.org/afp/161/10a/medication-safety-reporting.html) | 10/15/13 | 2013-medication-safety-reporting | 10-462932 | 2013090

# Dangers of Medicine Misuse

**Misuse**—taking an over-the-counter (OTC) medicine in a manner other than what is directed by the *Drug Facts* label or a doctor—is dangerous.

10,000

Medicine errors and misuse of commonly available over-the-counter medications result in approximately 10,000 emergency room visits for kids under 18 each year.

SOURCE: *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2009

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[scholastic.com/  
OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents)

**It is important to know that adolescents should not be taking OTC medicines without the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.**

## Is it dangerous or safe to...

**...take more than the recommended dose?**

**...redose more frequently than directed on the label?**

**...take medicines for reasons or symptoms other than what is directed on the label?**

**...use more than one medicine with the same active ingredient at the same time?**

**...take medicines for longer than directed on the label?**

# Six Important Medicine Use Tips

1. Never share your medicine with someone else.
2. Never use someone else's medicine.
3. Know the active ingredients in your medicine and never take more than one medicine with the same active ingredient.
4. Always read and follow the label, every time you take medicine.
5. It is never safe to misuse or abuse prescription or OTC medicines.
6. Only take medicines under the guidance of your parent or guardian.

## WHO WOULD YOU CALL...

...if you had a treatment question or an inquiry about your OTC medicine, or you needed quick advice in the case of an emergency poisoning?



## THE POISON HELP NUMBER



Poison centers take calls 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are **fast, free, confidential, and answered by experts**. Don't wait for an emergency to call your local poison center. You can ask questions, request materials, or get treatment for poisoning exposure.

# 1-800-222-1222

## LET'S REVIEW. WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Differences between prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines
- Importance of the *Drug Facts* label and its different sections

### ABOUT MEDICINE SAFETY

**Y**our students are entering a time in their lives when they'll be more responsible for their self-care, including making decisions about their health and medicines.

With this in mind, *OTC Medicine Safety* was specifically created for use by 5th- and 6th-grade teachers and students. The program teaches safe medicine use to children before self-medication begins. Now in year four, it provides even more resources to better equip educators, school nurses, and families with knowledge about responsible over-the-counter (OTC) medicine use and storage.

In support of this, the American Association of Poison Control Centers and Scholastic have created a website where educators and families alike can access valuable information and resources about OTC medicine safety.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following learning outcomes help prepare students for real-world situations with OTC medicines. Students will:

1. Identify the differences between prescription (Rx) and OTC medicines
2. Understand the importance of the *Drug Facts* label and be able to identify its different sections
3. Effectively use information from the *Drug Facts* label under the supervision of a parent or trusted adult
4. Distinguish between safe and unsafe storage locations for OTC medicines
5. Understand that using OTC medicines irresponsibly can cause harm
6. Recognize unsafe situations involving OTC medicines and use problem-solving skills to brainstorm solutions
7. Identify the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) and understand that this free resource is available to support safe medicine use

Here's what teachers are saying about the program:


"Students stayed involved in all four of the lessons. The pre-test and post-test are definitely eye-openers."

"I would refer [colleagues to] the program because of the fact that it is free and EASY to implement. Also, it doesn't take too much additional time out of the current curriculum that needs to be taught. It's quick, and to the point."

"The most important aspect of the program for my students was the reading of labels and understanding dosages. I teach in an urban area where many parents are not available and many of my students administer their own medications for headaches and minor injuries. It was highly valuable for them to understand that they CAN overdose or underdose."

## WHAT ELSE DID WE TALK ABOUT?

- Distinguishing between safe and unsafe storage locations for OTC medicines
- Understanding that using OTC medicines irresponsibly can cause harm
- Recognize unsafe situations involving OTC medicines and brainstorm solutions using problem-solving skills



### WHAT'S YOUR FAMILY'S MEDICINE ACTION PLAN?

As parents, we spend so much time preparing our children for the real world and teaching them the life skills they need to stay informed and safe.

It may sound odd at first to have a medicine action plan for your family, but consider this:

"Students begin to self-medicate around 11 years old. Unfortunately, when not equipped with the knowledge and information to make safe choices, adolescents may end up doing more harm than good."<sup>1</sup>


Creating an action plan is one way to know that you are using and storing medicines safely in your home. Get your whole family involved by talking about over-the-counter (OTC) medicine safety. Follow these steps to guide your discussion:

1. Use the checklist below to inspect your home for OTC medicine hazards.
2. Create an action plan.
3. Practice your plan and continue conversations all year long.

All of these resources and more are available for FREE:  
[scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents)

#### Our OTC Medicine Safety Checklist

- Read and follow the *Drug Facts* label every time.
- Measure carefully. Keep the medicine and the dosing device it comes with together. Never use household spoons to measure medicine.
- Check that all medicines, vitamins, and supplements are stored up, away, and out of sight of young children.
- Ensure that the child safety caps are locked on all medicines.
- Remind visitors to keep luggage, pocketbooks, or anything else that might have medicines in it out of children's reach and sight.
- Medicines should not be taken without the supervision of an adult.
- Make sure your children know that using OTC and prescription medicines incorrectly can cause harm.
- Program the Poison Help number into your phone: 1-800-222-1222.


 VIDEO ROOM: Watch this series of informational videos created by the FDA to teach your family about using medicines safely. Click on "Video Room" here: [fda.gov/medsinmyhome](http://fda.gov/medsinmyhome).

#### Emergency Contacts

Post these numbers in a prominent place in your home. Remember to save them into your cell phone in case of emergency.

Family Doctor:  
NAME AND PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Pharmacy:  
NAME AND PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

 Poison Help Number:  
1-800-222-1222  
Opens 24 hours a day every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential.


<sup>1</sup> SOURCE: Cheryl Ford, J.D., Attorney, Duane Morris, Mott MacDonald, and David Austin, Galanter, Trepp, and Partners, LLP. Source of the American Pharmacists Association. 2011. 177-197.

...and the Poison Help Number: 1-800-222-1222



# OTC Medicine Safety

FREE DOWNLOADABLE AND INTERACTIVE RESOURCES:  
[www.scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://www.scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety)



**SCHOLASTIC**

**OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY**

Materials to engage students and parents in a critical conversation about responsible medicine use

**McNeil**  
 Support for the development of this education material was provided by  
 A.A.P.C.C. **McNeil** Consumer Healthcare

**POISON HELP**  
 1-800-222-1222  
 Support for the development of this education material was provided by  
 A.A.P.C.C. **POISON HELP**

Modelled after the FDA's Medicines in My Home program

**All program materials are FREE.**

## WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.

The Use section of the label tells you the symptoms the medicine treats.

Look in the Warnings section to learn about what other medicines you should not take with this medicine, the side effects this medicine can cause, when to talk to a doctor before taking this medicine, and other important safety information such as when to stop taking the medicine and talk to a doctor.

The Directions section of the label tells you the amount of medicine (dose) you can take, how often you can take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

Some labels also have a Questions or Comments section that gives you the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

**Drug Facts**

Active ingredients	Purpose
Medicine 100 mg	cough suppressant
Medicine 150 mg	nasal decongestant

**Uses** Temporarily relieves:

- coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation
- nasal congestion

**Warnings**

- Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.

Ask a doctor before use if you have liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.

**When using this product**

- you may get drowsy
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

Stop use and seek medical help right away if allergic reaction occurs.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

**Directions**

- Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.

Age	Dose
adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period
children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period
children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor

**Other information**

- store at 20°-25°C (68°-77°F) ■ keep dry

**Inactive ingredients**  
 anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no. 10

**Questions or comments?**  
 Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

The Active ingredients section of the label tells you the names of the active ingredients in the medicine and what jobs they do (e.g., helping you reduce fever, or suppress cough). Some medicines may have more than one active ingredient.

In the Other information section of the label you'll find other things you need to know, such as how to store the medicine.

You'll find a list of any preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms in the Inactive ingredients section on the Drug Facts label. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.


This is not an actual Drug Facts label.

### OTC MEDICINE FACTS

- Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
- Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
- Always use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
- Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same active ingredient.
- All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up away and out of sight after every use.

**ASK FOR HELP**  
 Poison centers are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential. Save the Poison Help number in your phone:  
**1-800-222-1222**

REPRODUCTION FOR FAMILIES




## OTC Medicine Safety for Your Family

In school your child is participating in the OTC Medicine Safety program developed by Scholastic in partnership with the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

The comprehensive parent site offers all the FREE resources you need to learn about this important topic:  
[www.scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://www.scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents)


Ask your child's teacher for a copy of the OTC Medicine Safety family newsletter for more information.



**FREE FOR FAMILIES**

Continue critical discussions at home about OTC Medicine Safety with a number of informational materials, interactive resources, and more.

- RESOURCE SHEETS
- FAMILY ACTIVITIES
- MEDICINE SAFETY CHECKLIST
- DIGITAL STORYBOOK
- FAMILY NEWSLETTER
- ONLINE LEARNING ACTIVITY





# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## AFTER-SCHOOL RESOURCE GUIDE

Engage your community in a critical conversation  
about responsible medicine use.

[scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety)



Support for the development of this  
education material was provided by



Modeled after the FDA's **Medicines in My Home** program



## IMPORTANCE OF MEDICINE SAFETY

Just like adults, kids experience ailments, like headaches, stomachaches, and allergies. Research shows that by the 5th and 6th grades, kids begin to use over-the-counter (OTC) medicines without adult supervision to relieve symptoms of everyday illnesses. Yet, adolescents often lack basic knowledge about medicine safety, which can lead to them doing more harm than good. Informing kids and their families about responsible OTC medicine use can have a potentially lifesaving impact.

## YOUR ROLE

Self-medication extends beyond the hours kids spend at home or in school. With that in mind, the free *OTC Medicine Safety* program has been designed to help after-school group leaders discuss medicine safety with kids. The program contains valuable resources so that you, in partnership with teachers, school nurses, and families, can help kids understand the correct way to administer and store OTC medicines, as well as dispel common misconceptions about their use.

## ABOUT OTC MEDICINE SAFETY

The focus of *OTC Medicine Safety* is to help people become better educated about the medicines they buy and keep in their homes. It aims to arm kids and families with the tools they need to avoid the misuse or improper handling of OTC medicines that could lead to an emergency situation.

As an after-school group leader, you are part of a network invested in children's education and safety. In support of this, the American Association of Poison Control Centers, along with McNeil Consumer Healthcare and Scholastic, have created a website for community groups like yours, as well as for families and school professionals, to raise awareness about safe OTC medicine use. There you can access lesson plans, activities, printable materials, and more that will allow you to deliver an important age-appropriate message to kids.

\* Next Generation Science Standards is a registered trademark of Achieve. Neither Achieve nor the lead states and partners that developed the Next Generation Science Standards were involved in the production of, and do not endorse, this product.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

*OTC Medicine Safety* prepares kids for real-world situations with OTC medicines. After completing the program, they will be able to:

1. Identify the differences between prescription (Rx) and OTC medicines.
2. Understand the importance of the *Drug Facts* label and identify its different sections.
3. Effectively use information from the *Drug Facts* label under the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.
4. Distinguish between safe and unsafe storage locations for OTC medicines in the home.
5. Understand that using OTC medicines irresponsibly can cause harm.
6. Recognize unsafe situations involving OTC medicines and use problem-solving skills to brainstorm solutions.
7. Identify the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) and understand that this free resource is available to support safe medicine use.

*OTC Medicine Safety's* educational materials also meet both Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards.\*

## PROGRAM MATERIALS

This comprehensive education program is ready to use or can be adapted to work specifically with your extracurricular goals. All materials in this guide, as well as supporting content, are available online for FREE download at: [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/community](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/community).

## HOW TO GET STARTED

**Step 1:** Review the Learning Outcomes found above.

**Step 2:** Complete the following activities with your group. You can find step-by-step lesson instructions built around these activities at: [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/community](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/community).



Activity 1: OTC vs. Rx ..... p. 5  
 Activity 2: Check the Label ..... p. 6  
 Activity 3: The Right Dose ..... p. 7  
 Activity 4: Use Only as Directed..... p. 8  
 Activity 5: Home-Safety Scavenger Hunt ..... p. 9

**Step 3:** Refer to Family Connections on page 10 for suggestions on how to help kids share the message of *OTC Medicine Safety* at home. Visit [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents) for valuable information that families can start putting to use immediately.

## EDUCATION STANDARDS

GRADE	COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS
<b>GRADE 5</b>	<p><b>SPEAKING AND LISTENING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (Lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4)</li> <li>▶ Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (Lessons 2, 3, and 4)</li> <li>▶ Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace. (Lesson 4)</li> <li>▶ Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. (Lesson 4)</li> </ul> <p><b>READING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area. (Lesson 2)</li> <li>▶ Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently. (Lessons 2 and 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. (Lessons 2, 3, and 4)</li> <li>▶ Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic. (Lesson 2)</li> </ul> <p><b>NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Understanding About the Nature of Science:</b> Science is a human endeavor. (Lessons 1, 2, and 3)</li> <li>▶ <b>Science and Engineering Practices:</b> Planning and carrying out investigations to answer questions or test solutions to problems. (Lesson 2)</li> </ul>

**GRADE****COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:****ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS****GRADE 6****SPEAKING AND LISTENING:**

- ▶ Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (Lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- ▶ Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study. (Lessons 2 and 3)
- ▶ Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. (Lesson 3)
- ▶ Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information. (Lesson 4)

**READING:**

- ▶ Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. (Lesson 2)
- ▶ Integrate information presented in different media or formats as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue. (Lessons 2 and 3)

**READING IN SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS:**

- ▶ Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks. (Lesson 3)
- ▶ Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to grades 6–8 texts and topics. (Lessons 1 and 2)
- ▶ Integrate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text with a version of that information expressed visually. (Lesson 2)
- ▶ Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic. (Lesson 3)

**WRITING:**

- ▶ Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. (Lessons 2, 3, and 4)
- ▶ Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate. (Lesson 2)
- ▶ Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes. (Lesson 2)
- ▶ Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration. (Lesson 2)
- ▶ Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (Lesson 4)

**NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS**

- ▶ **Understanding About the Nature of Science:** Science is a human endeavor. (Lessons 1, 2, and 3)

\*Source: Cheryl Abel, Kerri Johnson, Dustin Waller, Maha Abdalla, and Carroll-Ann W. Goldsmith. Nonprescription medication use and literacy among New Hampshire eighth graders. *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*. 2012: 777-787

## ACTIVITY 1

**SKILLS LEARNED:**  
compare/contrast information • critical thinking



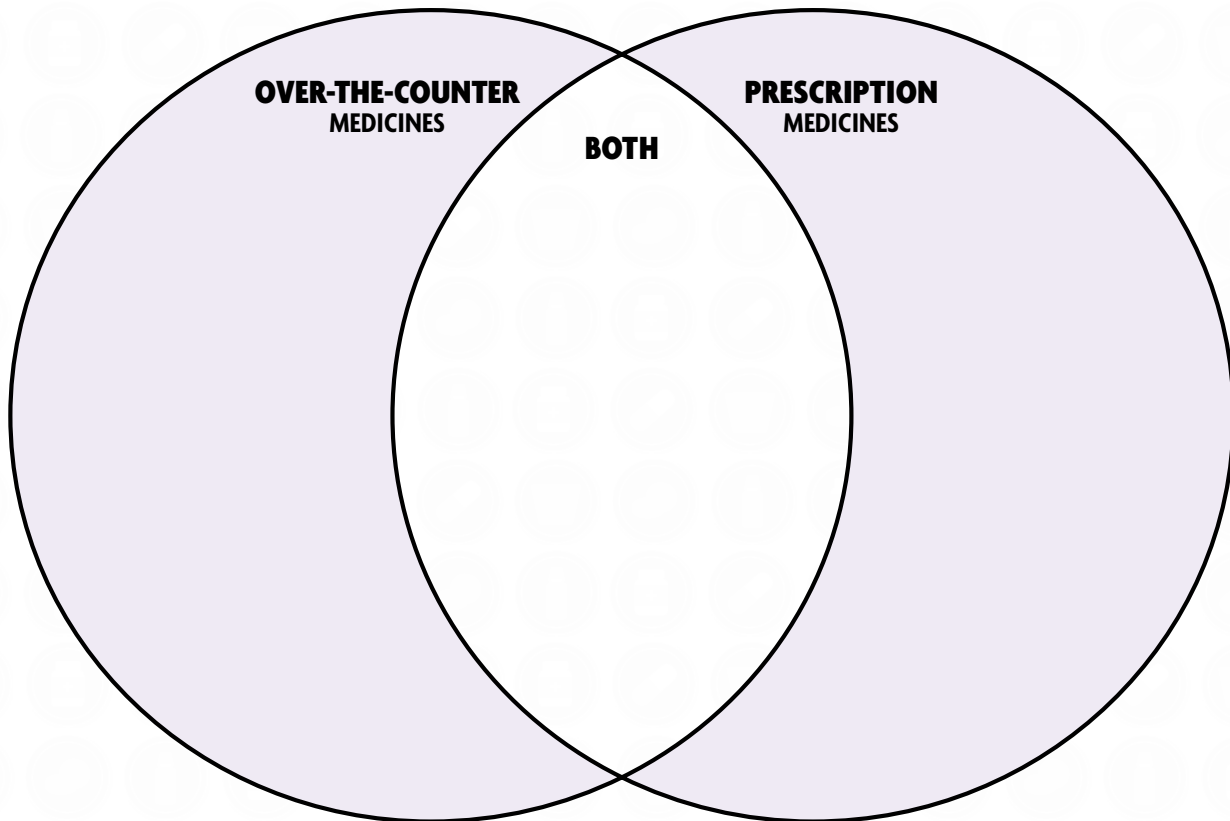
STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

# OTC vs. Rx

Medicines fall into two categories: over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription (Rx). Let's explore what you've learned about these two types of medicines. Test your knowledge by seeing if you can sort out OTC and Rx medicines' similarities and differences.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the statements at the bottom of the page and decide whether the information applies to OTC or Rx medicines or both. Then sort the statements by number into the correct place in the diagram.

Directions: Sort the statements by number in the correct place in the Venn diagram.



### About Medicines: Rx, OTC, or both?

1. Children should use only with permission of a parent or trusted adult.
2. Should only be used by the person for whom the medicine was ordered.
3. Prescribed by a doctor for one person.
4. The medicine label, including the directions, must be read and followed carefully before use.
5. Can buy without a doctor's prescription.
6. Dangerous to misuse or abuse.
7. A healthcare professional or your local poison center can answer questions about this medicine.

**Did you know?** In 2013, poison centers reported over 70,000 cases involving medication dosing errors in children 12 and younger. **READ ABOUT IT AT:** [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org).



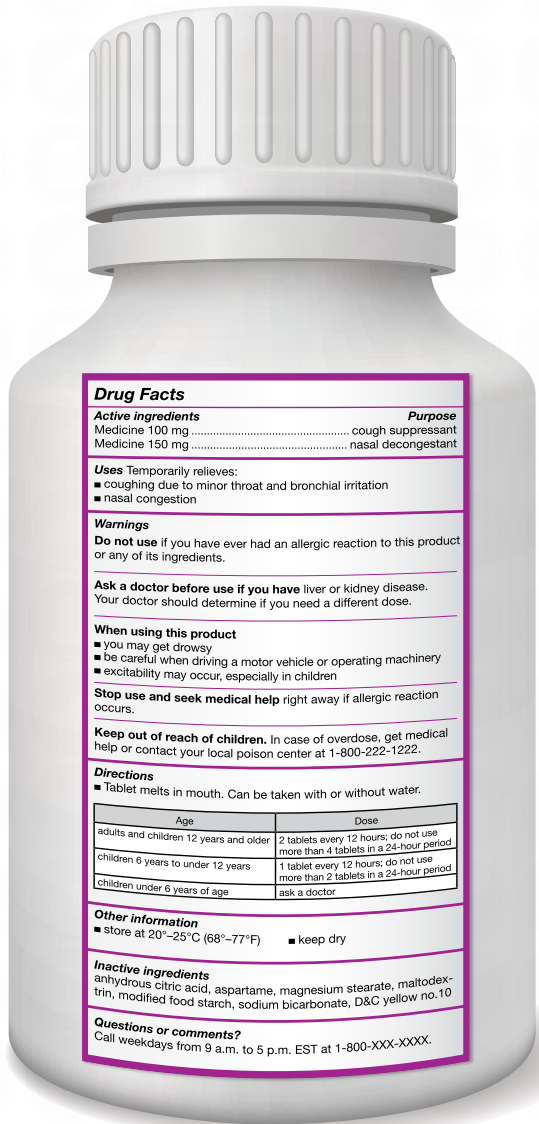
**SKILLS LEARNED:**  
analytical thinking • diagram reading

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## CHECK THE LABEL

Not reading or understanding the *Drug Facts* label on an over-the-counter (OTC) medicine can have serious consequences. But don't worry! This activity will help you become a whiz at reading *Drug Facts* labels so you can quickly locate important safety information.

**DIRECTIONS:** Examine the sample label pictured here. Use the information to answer the questions below on the back of this sheet.



This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

### Questions

- 1. Type of Medicine:** What types of conditions does this medicine treat? Why might someone use this medicine?
- 2. Side Effects:** Are there any side effects associated with the use of this medicine? If so, what are they?
- 3. Seek Medical Help:** What are some reasons that someone might have to contact a doctor or other healthcare professional before or after administering this medicine?
- 4. Directions:** What are the steps to properly administer the correct dose for a 6- to 12-year-old?
- 5. Warnings:** When should a person not use this medicine? Why is it important for someone to be aware of this information?

**Did you know?** In 2013, poison centers managed over 250,000 exposure cases in children ages 6 to 19; over half of these cases involved medication errors and misuse. **READ ABOUT IT AT:** [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org).

### ACTIVITY 3

**SKILLS LEARNED:**  
critical thinking • chart reading



STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## THE RIGHT DOSE

All medicines must be measured out as precisely as possible. Otherwise, a person will end up taking too little, which won't help their symptoms, or too much, which can be dangerous. To get the correct dose, a person should always use the dosing device that came with a medicine and carefully follow the dosing directions on its *Drug Facts* label.

**DIRECTIONS:** Below is a sample dosing table, similar to one you would find on a *Drug Facts* label. Use the table as well as your knowledge about medicine safety to answer the questions below.

Children under 6 years of age	Ask a doctor
Children 6 to under 12 years of age	2.5 mL (½ teaspoonful) two times per day; do not give more than 5 mL (1 teaspoonful) in 24 hours
Adults and children 12 years of age and over	5 mL (1 teaspoonful) two times per day; do not take more than 10 mL (2 teaspoonfuls) in 24 hours
Adults 65 years of age and over	5 mL (1 teaspoonful) two times per day; do not take more than 10 mL (2 teaspoonfuls) in 24 hours

### SHOW YOUR DOSING SMARTS

1. Olivia is 12 years old, and her parents gave her a first dose of this medicine at 8 a.m. They gave her a second dose at 3 p.m. the same day. By the evening, she is still not feeling better. Based on the table above, when can Olivia's parents give her another dose of this medicine?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What might happen if someone used a kitchen spoon to measure out a dose of this medicine?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why do you think doses aren't the same for all age groups? Why might parents of children under six need to ask a doctor before administering this medicine?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why is it important to always discuss medicine dosing with a parent or trusted adult?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How can you use what you've learned about dosing to help your family use over-the-counter (OTC) medicines more safely?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Did you know?** It wasn't until 1999 that the FDA standardized the *Drug Facts* label found on all OTC medicines to ensure that consumers can easily and quickly identify how to take a medicine, who should take the medicine, the purpose of the medicine, and more. **READ ABOUT IT AT:** [www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesforYou](http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesforYou).



## ACTIVITY 4

**SKILLS LEARNED:**  
researching a topic • presenting information



STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

# USE ONLY AS DIRECTED

You've learned that over-the-counter (OTC) medicine use can be risky if not taken as intended. Use the space below to design a poster that warns others about the hazards of misusing OTC medications. Think about your group's discussions on this topic and the best way to share this information with others. To make your poster effective, include a thought-provoking slogan, eye-catching artwork, and factual statements, data, and evidence that support your message. When done, create a full-size version of your poster to present to your group. Have your group work together to display your posters in your community and spread the word about *OTC Medicine Safety*.

**Did you know?** In 2013, poison centers reported over 70,000 cases involving medication dosing errors in children 12 and younger. **READ ABOUT IT AT:** [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org).

**SKILLS LEARNED:**  
researching a topic • presenting information



STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## HOME-SAFETY SCAVENGER HUNT

People store medicines in many different places in their homes, from inside cabinets and drawers to on top of kitchen counters and bedside tables. If medicines are stored improperly, like those in the house below, they could lead to accidental poisoning.

**DIRECTIONS:** Circle six medicine storage errors in the picture. On the back of this sheet, describe ways to fix the errors pictured above to help make this home safer.





## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Families play a vital role in guiding kids to make safe choices that could prevent dangerous medicine mishaps. It's important for every family member to be aware of over-the-counter (OTC) medicine hazards in their homes and the harm they could pose to children.

### CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Encourage kids to talk about responsible use and handling of OTC medicines with their families. Ask them to think back on what they've learned during the *OTC Medicine Safety* program, and then brainstorm ways to engage family members in a discussion about OTC medicine safety in the home.

To kick-start the conversation at home, suggest that family members do the following together:

- ▶ Review *Drug Facts* labels.
- ▶ Program the Poison Help number and emergency contacts into phones.
- ▶ Inspect their homes for OTC medicine hazards.
- ▶ Talk about why it's important for kids to always communicate with a trusted adult before taking any medicine.
- ▶ Create a Medicine Action Plan—a written strategy that details ways to avoid a medication emergency and what to do if one were to accidentally happen.

### REACH OUT TO FAMILIES

Distribute the family newsletter, available at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents), to students to take home and share with their families. It will direct families to the website where they can access more free resources to make their homes safer when it comes to OTC medicines.



### ONLINE OTC MEDICINE SAFETY RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Families will find the following additional resource sheets at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents):

- ▶ “How to Read a *Drug Facts* Label” to understand the purpose of OTC medicines, who should take them, and how.
- ▶ “How to Safely Dose Medicine” by using the correct tools to accurately measure medicines.
- ▶ “How to Safely Store & Dispose of Medicines in Your Home,” especially to keep them out of reach and sight of young children.
- ▶ “How to Prevent Medicine Misuse” and the dangers OTC medicines pose if not taken as directed.

### OTHER RESOURCES

“What's Your Family's Medicine Action Plan?” A checklist to help families create a strategy for safely dealing with OTC medications in their homes.



**Digital Flipbook:** A digital story to read with kids and start a conversation about OTC medicines.



**Learning Activity:** In this online activity, kids hunt through a house room by room for the OTC medicine hazards.

## KNOW THE FACTS:



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## FOR TEENS & TWEENS

The majority of adolescents begin to self-medicate with OTC medicines between 11-12 years old.\*



By age 16, approximately  
**90%**  
of adolescents report self-administering OTC medications

### UNSUPERVISED SELF-ADMINISTRATION CAN LEAD TO INCORRECT USE IN INDIVIDUALS UNDER THE AGE OF 18



Medicine errors and misuse of OTC medications result in approximately **10,000 ER visits** for kids under 18 each year.<sup>1</sup>

In 2013, America's poison centers managed over **250,000 exposure cases** involving children ages 6 to 19; over half of these cases involved medication errors and misuse.<sup>2</sup>



## These incidents are preventable

## A BIG PART OF THE SOLUTION IS **EDUCATION**



Remember to always use the dosing device that comes with the medicine



Be sure to read & follow the *Drug Facts* label every time

**1**

Take only one medicine at a time with the same active ingredient



Store all drugs up & away & out of reach & sight



Program the Poison Help Number into your phone:  
**1-800-222-1222**

This and other resources are available for free: [www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](http://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)

The *OTC Medicine Safety* program is an educational campaign to raise awareness about over-the-counter medicine safety and is sponsored by Scholastic and the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

\*Cheryl Abel, Kerri Johnson, Dustin Waller, Maha Abdalla, and Carroll-Ann W. Goldsmith. Nonprescription Medication Use and Literacy Among New Hampshire Eighth Graders. *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*. 2012; 777-787.  
<sup>1</sup>Schillie, Sarah F. et al. Medication Overdoses Leading to Emergency Department Visits Among Children. 2009; *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. Volume 37, Issue 3, 181-187. <sup>2</sup>Mowry JB, Spyker DA, Cantilena LR Jr, Bailey JE, Ford M. 2012 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System (NPDS): 30th Annual Report. *Clin Toxicol (Phila)*. 2013 Dec; 51(10): 949-1229.

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** Below is a sample administrator/principal notification letter that you may adapt to inform your administrator or principal of your desire to teach the *OTC Medicine Safety* program.

CUT OR FOLD HERE BEFORE REPRODUCING

## Dear Administrator or Principal:

I wanted to make you aware of my interest in incorporating *OTC Medicine Safety*, a unit of study about over-the-counter (OTC) medicine safety, into my classroom health curriculum. Designed specifically for 5th- and 6th-grade students, *OTC Medicine Safety* offers important age-appropriate lessons with direct connections to Common Core State Standards. *See attached chart for reference.*

*OTC Medicine Safety* offers valuable information my students will be able to apply to their daily lives in immediate, tangible ways. I'd be happy to meet with you and discuss any questions or concerns you may have surrounding incorporation of *OTC Medicine Safety* into our classroom studies.

Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_

## Why is this topic important for our students?

Research shows students begin to self-medicate around 11 years old; unfortunately, when not equipped with the knowledge and information to make safe choices, adolescents may end up doing more harm than good.<sup>1</sup> Medicine errors and misuse of OTC medications result in approximately 10,000 ER visits for kids under 18 each year.<sup>2</sup> As educators, we have the opportunity to reach students during this critical period as they begin to develop their self-care skills. This new program will emphasize to students the importance of using medication only under the supervision of an adult.

## Educator and Student Tested

*OTC Medicine Safety* was developed with input from 5th- and 6th-grade educators, and it was tested among students in the target age groups, too. Students completing the program showed a measurable increase in their knowledge and awareness of responsible use of OTC medicines. This leads to more positive health outcomes not only for the students we have reached, but for the family and friends they inform, as well.

[scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety)

## Summary of Learning Outcomes

After participating in the *OTC Medicine Safety* program, students will be able to:

1. Identify the differences between prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and brainstorm solutions using problem-solving skills
2. Understand the importance of the *Drug Facts* label (*included on every OTC medicine*) and be able to identify its different sections
3. Recognize unsafe situations involving OTC medicines
4. Understand safe storage locations for OTC medicines
5. Understand that using OTC medicines irresponsibly can cause harm

Below are the Common Core State Standards that the *OTC Medicine Safety* program supports.

## EDUCATION STANDARDS

GRADE	COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS
GRADE 5	<p><b>SPEAKING AND LISTENING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts. (Lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4)</li> <li>Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats. (Lessons 2, 3, and 4)</li> <li>Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details. (Lesson 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>READING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text. (Lesson 2)</li> <li>Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly. (Lessons 2 and 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas. (Lessons 2 and 4)</li> <li>Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation. (Lesson 2)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Understanding About the Nature of Science:</b> Science is a human endeavor (Lessons 1, 2, and 3)</li> </ul>
GRADE	COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS
GRADE 6	<p><b>SPEAKING AND LISTENING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues. (Lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4)</li> <li>Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats and explain how it contributes to a topic. (Lessons 2 and 3)</li> <li>Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details. (Lesson 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>READING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text. (Lesson 2)</li> <li>Integrate information presented in different media or formats as well as in words. (Lessons 2 and 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>READING IN SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments. (Lesson 3)</li> <li>Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases. (Lessons 1 and 2)</li> <li>Integrate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text. (Lesson 2)</li> <li>Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with text on the same topic. (Lesson 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information. (Lessons 2 and 4)</li> <li>Conduct short research projects to answer a question. (Lesson 2)</li> <li>Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes. (Lesson 2)</li> <li>Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (Lesson 4)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Understanding About the Nature of Science:</b> Science is a human endeavor (Lessons 1, 2, and 3)</li> </ul>
<p>SOURCES: English Language Arts/Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). <a href="http://corestandards.org/read-the-standards">corestandards.org/read-the-standards</a>. Science: Next Generation Science Standards, <a href="http://nextgenscience.org">nextgenscience.org</a>.</p>	



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ [personalize],

Research shows that children begin to self-medicate at around age 11—in fifth and sixth grades. By the time they reach age 16, approximately 90 percent report taking over-the-counter (OTC) medicines on their own. If not equipped with the knowledge and training to make safe choices, mistakes can happen, leading to negative outcomes:

- In 2013, poison professionals at the nation’s 55 poison centers managed about 2.2 million human poison exposures, with children older than 6 years accounting for about half of all poison exposure cases.
- An estimated 58,546 emergency department visits were caused by adolescents self-administering medicines, and 33.9 percent of these visits resulted from an overdose of OTC medicine—about 10,000 per year. (Source: *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*)

Given your role, **[name of the organization, agency, or school you are contacting]** can help young people make safe choices, paving the way for them to become knowledgeable adults. The [OTC Medicine Safety](http://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/) program (<http://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/>) and After-School Guide, created by the American Association of Poison Control Centers and Scholastic, with support from McNeil Consumer Healthcare, provides opportunities for you to get involved in this issue. The program raises awareness about the safe use of OTC medicine and supplies resources to better equip educators, school nurses, families, and the community with knowledge about OTC medicines and their safe use. Its goal is to influence behavior *before* children start self-medicating. I have attached a fact sheet describing the curriculum for your review.

We would be interested in collaborating with **[name of organization/school]**, ensuring that the children growing up in our community get the information they need to make responsible and knowledgeable choices around OTC medicines. We are very impressed with Scholastic’s materials and are interested in discussing how we can, together, promote the use of these resources.

**[Closing of choice]**

Sincerely,

**[Signature block]**



**Media Contact:**

**NAME**

**EMAIL**

**PHONE**

## **Local Community Group Supports OTC Medicine Safety Program to Educate Tweens on Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety**

*The OTC Medicine Safety Program Provides Parents and Teachers With a Resource to Teach Tweens the Importance of OTC Medicine Safety*

**DATE – (ORGANIZATION CITY, STATE) – ORGANIZATION NAME** is teaming up with the [American Association of Poison Control Centers](#) (AAPCC) and [Scholastic](#) (NASDAQ: SCHL), the global children’s publishing, education, and media company, to help educate tweens on the safe use of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines with a national [OTC Medicine Safety](#) education program. **ORGANIZATION NAME** will be implementing the *OTC Medicine Safety* program at an upcoming event on **DATE, TIME at LOCATION**. Research shows that tweens begin to self-administer medicine around 11 years old, or in fifth to sixth grade. In 2012, America’s poison centers managed more than 296,000 exposure cases involving children ages 6 to 19 and over half of these cases involved medication errors and misuse.<sup>1</sup>

Parents play a critical role in helping their tweens learn about the responsible use of OTC medicines. With approximately 10,000 kids under age 18 visiting emergency departments every year due to errors from self-administering OTC medications, it is important for parents and guardians to discuss the safe use and storage of OTC medicines with their tweens. The *OTC Medicine Safety* program equips parents, teachers, and guardians with the necessary materials to help facilitate these critical discussions.

Below are the Top Five tips from the *OTC Medicine Safety* program that are helpful as parents discuss self-administration, safe use, and storage of OTC medicines with their kids:

1. Tweens should only use OTC medicines with permission and supervision from their parent or guardian.
2. Always read and follow the *Drug Facts* label, and never take more than the directed amount or more frequently than what’s directed on the label.
3. Know what is in your medicine and never use more than one medicine with the same active ingredient.
4. Always use the dosing device that comes with the medicine. Never use household measurement tools like teaspoons, tablespoons, or kitchen spoons.
5. Store medicines up and away and out of sight after every use.



**“QUOTE,” COMMUNITY LEADER NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION. “QUOTE.”**

Successfully launched in schools nationwide in 2013 as “*OTC Literacy*,” the *OTC Medicine Safety* program includes resources and engaging educational activities specifically designed for parents and teachers of tweens to increase knowledge of OTC medicine safety and responsible use. The program places special emphasis on the message that tweens should only take OTC medications with the permission and supervision of parents or guardians. Please visit [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety) for supportive tips on how to discuss *OTC Medicine Safety*.

**About ORGANIZATION  
BOILERPLATE**

**About AAPCC**

The AAPCC promotes the nation’s 57 poison centers and supports their efforts to prevent and treat poison exposures. Poison centers offer free, confidential medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the Poison Help Line at 1-800-222-1222. This service provides a primary resource for poisoning information and helps reduce costly emergency department visits through in-home treatment. To learn more, visit [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org), like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or read our blog at [aapcc.wordpress.com](http://aapcc.wordpress.com). To join your voice with other poison center supporters, register for the AAPCC advocacy network at [www.capwiz.com/aapcc](http://www.capwiz.com/aapcc)—click on “Action E-List.”

###

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<sup>1</sup> Mowry JB, Spyker DA, Cantilena LR Jr, Bailey JE, Ford M. 2012 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers’ National Poison Data System (NPDS): 30th Annual Report. *Clin Toxicol* (Phila). 2013 Dec;51(10):949-1229



## Public Service Announcements & Media Clips

The following public service announcements (PSAs) and media clips reflect the *OTC Medicine Safety* program's key message points. Disseminating them through your communication networks will reinforce lessons learned in the classroom, at community events, and at youth-related activities. Pitch them to radio and television stations, newspapers, government agencies, schools, and other partners. They can also be read, printed, or posted on websites. Space has been provided for you to add your organization or agency's contact information, making your organization a point of contact for additional information.

### Tips

- If you are adapting these tools for print or posting, be sure to personalize them by adding pictures.
  
- Strategically pitch these PSAs to coincide with:
  - Changing seasons when over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are more likely to be used.
  - [National Take-Back Events](#): September
  - [National Recovery Month](#): September
  - [Family Day](#): September
  - [National Suicide Prevention Week](#): September
  - [National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month](#): October
  - [National Red Ribbon Week](#): October
  - [Talk About Your Medicines Month](#): October
  - [Poison Prevention Week](#): March
  - [National Prevention Week](#): May
  - [National Safety Month](#): June
  
- Integrate these messages as you plan your local outreach activities.

## Public Service Announcements

### 30 seconds

- Be medicine-safe. Before you take that over-the-counter medicine, ALWAYS:

- READ and FOLLOW the *Drug Facts* label.
  - KNOW your dose. Taking too much medicine or taking it too often can cause serious health problems.
  - ASK a pharmacist, nurse, or doctor if you don't understand the medicine label.
  - STORE OTC medicines up and away from young children.
  - IDENTIFY what ingredients are in your medicine! Take only one medicine at a time with the same active ingredient.
  - Learn more at [URL] or call [phone number].
- Did you know that by the time teens reach age 16, about 90 percent say they've taken OTC medicine without adult supervision? Many start doing this when they're only 11 or 12 years old! Follow these safety tips to help the next generation grow into responsible adults. Make sure they know that:
- Using OTC and prescription medicines incorrectly can be dangerous.
  - Asking a pharmacist, nurse, or doctor if they have questions is recommended.
  - All medicines, including cold remedies, vitamins, and other supplements should be stored up and away from young children.
  - ALWAYS dispose of medicines properly.

Contact **[organization name]** at **[URL]** or call **[phone number]** for more information.

- When you're sick or not feeling well...
- If you're a teen or younger, DON'T DO IT ALONE: ALWAYS take medicines with a responsible adult's guidance.
  - READ the *Drug Facts* label every time you take your medicine.
  - FOLLOW the label, and KNOW your dose. Taking too much medicine or taking it too often can cause serious health problems.
  - TAKE only one medicine at a time with the same active ingredient, and if you're not sure ASK a healthcare provider for help.

To learn more about *OTC Medicine Safety*, contact **[organization name]** at **[URL]** or call **[phone number]**.

- **[Month]** is **[name of event]**. Taking OTC medicines as directed is an important strategy to remember as we acknowledge this important time. ALWAYS READ and FOLLOW the *Drug Facts* label. REMEMBER that taking too much medicine or taking it too often can cause serious health problems. TAKE only one medicine at a time with the same active ingredient.

When in doubt, ASK a healthcare provider for help. ALWAYS dispose of medicines properly. To learn more about *OTC Medicine Safety*, contact **[organization name]** at **[URL]** or call **[phone number]**.

#### 10 seconds

- Treat OTC medicine with the same care and caution as prescription meds. Learn more. Contact **[organization name]** at **[URL]** or **[phone number]**.
- Grow a responsible generation and teach them about OTC medicine. Learn more at **[URL]** or call **[phone number]**.
- OTC medicines can be dangerous if you don't read and follow the *Drug Facts* label. Learn more. Contact **[organization name]** at **[URL]** or call **[phone number]**.
- **[Month]** is **[event name]**. During this time, always remember to take OTC medicines as directed. Contact **[organization name]** at **[URL]** or call **[phone number]**.

### Media Clips

Use these taglines on websites, billboards, bus placards, and other materials:

- Learn the Facts About OTC Medicine Safe Use.
- OTC Medicine Safe Use Starts With Me.
- Be Medicine-Savvy & Medicine-Safe—Read and Follow the *Drug Facts* Label, and Know Your Dose. Ask a Pharmacist, Nurse, or Doctor if You Have Questions.
- Store OTC Medicines Up & Away. Know What Ingredients Are in the Medicines You're Taking.
- Become "OTC Literate!" Use Meds Correctly, Store Wisely, Dispose of Properly.
- Using OTC and Prescription Medicines Incorrectly Can Cause Harm.



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## Social Media Posts

Social media can be used by parents and community leaders to communicate valuable information about medicine safety. While the message may be universal, the approach may differ from messenger to messenger. Provided are *OTC Medicine Safety* program Facebook and Twitter posts targeting [parents](#) and other [community leaders](#). Think about passing these posts forward to educators, youth-serving organizations, businesses, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, the media, and other community partners.

### Tips

- Remember that adding pictures and videos increases the likelihood that your posts will be shared and retweeted.
  
- Strategically pitch these PSAs to coincide with:
  - Changing seasons when OTC medicines are more likely to be used.
  - [National Take-Back Events](#): September
  - [National Recovery Month](#): September
  - [Family Day](#): September
  - [National Suicide Prevention Week](#): September
  - [National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month](#): October
  - [National Red Ribbon Week](#): October
  - [Talk About Your Medicines Month](#): October
  - [Poison Prevention Week](#): March
  - [National Prevention Week](#): May
  - [National Safety Month](#): June
  
- Integrate these messages as you plan your local outreach activities.

## For [Parents to Share](#)

### Facebook

- How have you helped your children battle the cold and flu season? Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are often used to help alleviate their red noses and raspy coughs. Check out these tips and resources from Scholastic to help your kids learn about OTC medicine safety. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety) #OTCed
- Do your kids know the difference between over-the-counter medicines and prescription (Rx) medicines? Talk to them about OTC medicine safety using these great resources from Scholastic: [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety) #OTCed
- #OTCed Tip: Over-the-counter medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs. Keep young people safe, learn about OTC medicine safety, and talk with your child today. Learn more at [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety). #OTCed
- True or false? It is okay for you to use a regular teaspoon or household spoon to measure liquid medicines. The answer is “No!” You should ALWAYS use the dosing device that comes with the medicine. Learn other important facts to keep your children safe. Visit [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety) today.

### Twitter

- #OTCed Tip: Have Qs about OTC medicine? Ask your pediatrician, nurse, or pharmacist to ensure your family’s safety. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)
- #OTCed Tip: OTC medicines need to be treated w/the same care & caution as Rx drugs. Learn more about OTC med safety: [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)
- #OTCed Tip: Always read & follow the *Drug Facts* label. Never take more than what’s directed. Learn more: [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)
- Never use more than one medicine w/the same active ingredient. Talk with your tween about OTC med safety. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety) #OTCed

## For [Community Leaders to Share](#)

### Facebook

- Around age 11, children start wanting to take care of themselves, and **[job title(s) here]** play a critical role in helping them along the way. Teach children about the safe use of OTC medicines. Get all the resources you need on #OTCed for tweens through the *OTC Medicine Safety* program, and take steps toward OTC medicine safety today. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)

- Did you know that by age 16, approximately 90 percent of adolescents have self-administered over-the-counter (OTC) medicines? Learn how to keep tweens safe when it comes to OTC medicine with these tips and resources: [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety) (Fact source: JAPhA.org)
- **[Enter month here]** is **[name of event]**. Protect the children in our community by talking to them about OTC medicine safety. Visit [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety), #OTCed for tweens to learn how to keep tweens safe as they navigate into their teen years.

### Twitter

- OTC meds should be used only as directed. Learn how. Teach others. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)
- Tweens you know may be taking OTC meds on their own w/out supervision. Learn how to help keep them safe. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)
- Help tweens become med-savvy. Teach them about *OTC Medicine Safety* now. [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)

#OTCed Tip: **[Insert month]** is **[insert event]**. Protect the tweens and families in your community now. Learn how: [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety](https://www.scholastic.com/otcmedsafety)

# LESSON 1: All About Medicine

**Teachers:** Before each lesson in the *OTC Medicine Safety* program, inform students that they should never take medicine without the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.

## Objectives

- Define over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and prescription medicines
- Understand the similarities and differences between OTC medicines and prescription medicines.
- Define how to responsibly use medicine.

## Materials:

- Student Worksheet 1
- Empty medicine bottle with dosing cup
- Paper
- Pen or pencil
- Internet access (optional)

Visit the homepage at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety) for additional lesson plans and a variety of resources to support these discussions both inside the classroom and at home.

**Time:** One 40-minute class period

**Technology Connection:** [Download Whiteboard Image: Sealed Bottle](#), [Download Whiteboard Image: Medicine Label](#), [Download Classroom Poster: Drug Facts label](#).

## Key Vocabulary

- **Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine:** Medicine that is bought in a pharmacy, drugstore, or supermarket and obtained without the need for a doctor's prescription.
- **Prescription (Rx) medicine:** Medicine that is specially ordered for you by a doctor or other qualified healthcare practitioner, available only from a pharmacist.
- Both OTC and Rx medicines can cause real harm if label instructions aren't read and followed when they are administered.

## Lesson Steps

1. Assess students' knowledge before you begin. Explain that research shows students in their age range are beginning to self-medicate; and without the information and comprehensive understanding that they need to make safe choices about medicine, kids can easily do more harm than good. Tell students that it's important to have an understanding of safe medicine use before they become more responsible for their own self-care. Have students complete the [Pre-Assessment Quiz](#) online or print out and reproduce the survey. Save the completed quizzes, as students will complete the same quiz for a post-program comparison.
2. Begin a class discussion by asking students to brainstorm a list of symptoms they have had when they were not feeling well. (*Answers may include: upset stomach, headache, fever, cough, etc.*)
3. Then invite students to share a personal story that describes what happens when they get sick. (*Answers may include: go to the doctor, take medicine, rest, drink water or juice, stay home from school, etc.*)
4. Discuss how there are many different ways that doctors treat sickness, one of which is recommending medicine. Medicines fall into two main categories: OTC or prescription. These categories are defined as follows:



## LESSON 1: All About Medicine

**Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine:** Medicine that is bought in a pharmacy, drugstore, or supermarket and obtained without the need for a doctor's prescription.

**Prescription (Rx) medicine:** Medicine that is specially ordered for you by a doctor or other qualified healthcare practitioner, available only from the pharmacist.

- At the front of the class, display and identify each of these components: a sample of an OTC bottle of fever reducer, the age-appropriate dosing device (child dosing cup), the [sealed bottle image](#), the [medicine label image](#), and the classroom poster image of the [Drug Facts label](#).
- Describe how every medicine is unique and has a certain set of characteristics that enable it to treat specific symptoms. Have students recall a time when they had to take medicine. Ask students:  
Q: *What measuring tools or devices has your parent or a trusted adult used to give you liquid medicines?*  
Q: *Has anyone ever taken medicine without the permission of a trusted adult? If so, why?*  
Q: *Have you ever read the Drug Facts label on an OTC medicine container?*
- Explain how every medicine comes with dosing directions, and that dosing instructions on OTC medicines appear on the *Drug Facts* label. **Reinforce the importance of always communicating with a trusted adult before taking any medicine.** The purpose of these instructions is to help make sure that the medicine is taken correctly. When we do not follow instructions, the medicine may not work the way it is meant to, it can make you feel worse, or it can even hurt you. You may have allergic reactions or experience side effects like dizziness or nausea. Sometimes when you mix certain foods with a medicine, the medicine does not work properly.
- Organize the class into groups of five or six. Distribute Student Worksheet 1 and have teams complete the worksheet. Discuss their answers as a class and invite any follow-up questions about the lesson.
- Distribute the family newsletter resource available at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety) and encourage the students to continue the discussion at home.



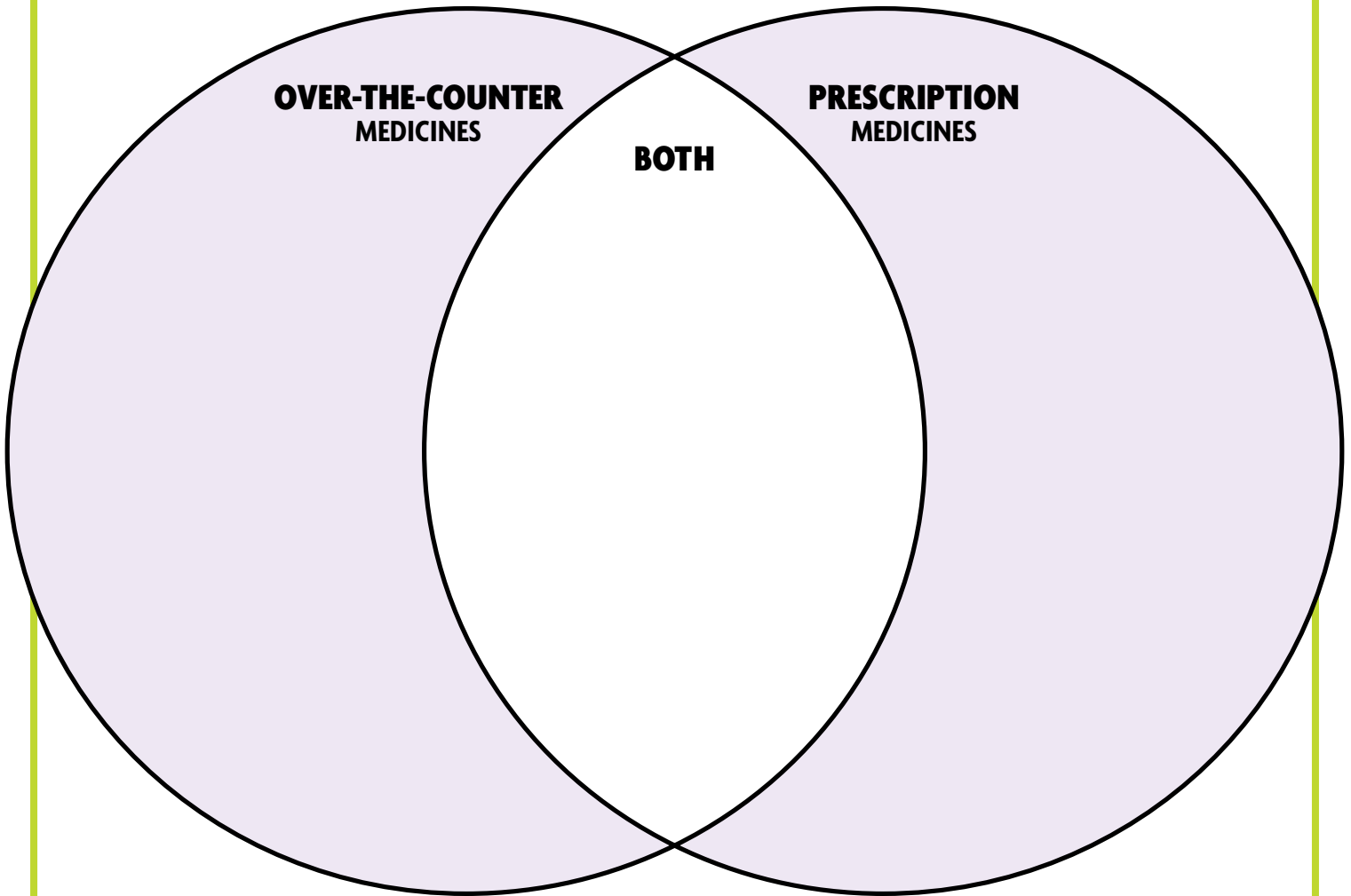
### Conclusion and At-Home Connection

After your discussion of OTC medicines and prescription (Rx) medicines—as well as a brief overview of the *Drug Facts* label—tell the class that you'll be moving on to a broader, more expansive lesson about the label in Lesson 2. Send home the Family Newsletter resource, available in the Families Section at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents), so students may continue the discussion at home. Encourage students to discuss what they have learned about the Poison Help number, to post the number in a visible place in their home, and to get family members to save the number in their mobile phones.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

Directions: Sort the statements by number in the correct place in the Venn diagram.



## About Medicines: Rx, OTC, or both?

1. Children should use only with permission of a parent or trusted adult.
2. Should only be used by the person for whom the medicine was ordered.
3. Prescribed by a doctor for one person.
4. The medicine label, including the directions, must be read and followed carefully before use.
5. Can buy without a doctor's prescription.
6. Dangerous to misuse or abuse.
7. A healthcare professional or your local poison center can answer questions about this medicine.

**Did you know?** In 2013, poison centers reported over 70,000 cases involving medication dosing errors in children 12 and younger. **READ ABOUT IT AT:** [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org).

## LESSON 2: Reading and Understanding the Drug Facts Label

**Teachers:** Before each lesson in the *OTC Medicine Safety* program, inform students that they should never take medicine without the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.

### Objectives

- Identify the *Drug Facts* label.
- Learn the definitions of the terms on the *Drug Facts* label.
- Know the importance of reading and understanding all of the information on the *Drug Facts* label.
- Learn the potential consequences of not reading and understanding all of the information on the *Drug Facts* label.
- Identify the steps to take in the event of a medicine mistake.

### Materials:

- Student Worksheet 2
- Two empty fever-reducer bottles (could use a liquid product and a solid-dose product)
- Two empty bottles of pain relievers
- Two empty bottles of antacids
- Two empty bags of cough drops
- Paper
- Pen or pencil
- Internet access (optional)
- [Classroom Poster: Drug Facts label](#)
- Projector
- Whiteboard (optional)

**Time:** Two 40-minute class periods

**Technology Connection:** FDA's [Medicines in My Home video](#), [Drug Facts label](#), [Download Classroom Poster: Drug Facts label](#), [Download Whiteboard Image: Medicine Label](#), [Digital Storybook: The Perfect Project](#).

### Key Vocabulary

- **Drug Facts label:** A standard label on over-the-counter (OTC) medicines that provides information about the medicine, including the active ingredients, instructions for use, and important warnings. Understanding the important information contained within the *Drug Facts* label and properly reading the *Drug Facts* label are critical elements for safe use of OTC medicines.

### Lesson Steps

1. Begin the discussion by challenging students to focus on the overall importance of reading directions. Ask students:  
*Q: What could happen if you only read part of the directions on a test?*  
Discuss responses and begin to link the importance of reading informational text in order to understand key information or directions that are vital to completing a task properly or getting the desired results.
2. Explain that all directions are not the same, meaning that sometimes the directions won't appear at the top of the page like on a test. You may have to look for them and you should always ask your teacher, parent, or a trusted adult to clarify them so you fully understand what to do.

## LESSON 2: Reading and Understanding the Drug Facts Label

3. Explain that the class is going to learn about the importance of reading and following all of the instructions found on the *Drug Facts* label of OTC medicines.
4. Organize the class into groups of five or six students and give one medicine container to each group. Distribute Student Worksheet 2.
5. Show the FDA's [Medicines in My Home video](#), and pause it when necessary to highlight the different sections on the Drug Facts label and have students ask questions. In support of the video, have students look closely at the medicine samples they have in their groups.
6. Before beginning the worksheet activity, ask students:
  - Q: Which medicine does your group have?
  - Q: Where are the directions on medicines and what do they tell you?
  - Q: Where are the warnings?
  - Q: Where is the ingredients section?
7. Explain that directions and drug information for OTC medicines are found on *Drug Facts* labels, which appear on OTC medicines per FDA regulation.
8. Walk students through each section of the labels on the worksheet. Create a vocabulary list to reinforce new terms, explaining that these terms provide us with the information we need to use medicine responsibly. If you are using a whiteboard, project the image of the [Drug Facts label](#) onto the board. Review the different sections of the label (use the [Classroom Poster](#) to support the discussion) and reinforce the new vocabulary words or terms:

### Key Terms

- **ACTIVE INGREDIENTS:** The ingredients in the medicine that make it work.
  - **WARNINGS:** Safety information including side effects, the questions you should ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and which medicines to avoid using at the same time.
  - **OTHER INFORMATION:** How to store the medicine.
  - **USES:** Describes the symptoms that the medicine treats.
  - **DIRECTIONS:** Indicates the amount or dose of medicine to take, how often to take it, and how much you can take in one day.
  - **INACTIVE INGREDIENTS:** Ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms (e.g., preservatives, flavorings).
  - **QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?:** Call the company if you have questions about a specific medicine.
9. Add the new terms to the whiteboard as you review each and discuss the definitions. Have students refer to their medicine containers to reinforce these terms. You may also link the label to <http://www.bemedwise.org/label/label.htm> and roll over each section as you review.
  10. Explain to students that when medicines are not used properly, real consequences, including serious harm, may result. **Reinforce the importance of always communicating with a trusted adult before taking any medicine.** The consequences of using medicine improperly can include:
    - **Ingredients may cause allergic reactions.**
    - **Medicines can be harmful if you take too much and may not be effective if you do not take the proper dose.**
    - **Certain medicines can interact with other medicines and may cause side effects or harm when mixed.**
    - **Many medicines contain the same active ingredients, and should never be taken at the same time.**

## LESSON 2: Reading and Understanding the Drug Facts Label

11. Discuss how to use the **Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222**. This number should be used if a student or his or her parent or a trusted adult has questions about how to take or give medicine, if there's been a medicine mistake, or if there's been an accidental ingestion of medicine. Inform students of the following:
  - Calls are free.
  - Calls are confidential.
  - Experts answer the phone 24/7, 365 days a year.
  - Unlike 911, it doesn't have to be an emergency to call. Call with questions or for information, or if you have an emergency.
  - Poison center experts get more than 3 million calls a year about all kinds of things. They have heard everything, so don't be embarrassed to call.
12. Give students a short writing assignment:

**Research the regulation that required Drug Facts labels to appear on OTC medicines. Describe the regulation and identify some of the problems that it helped to address.**

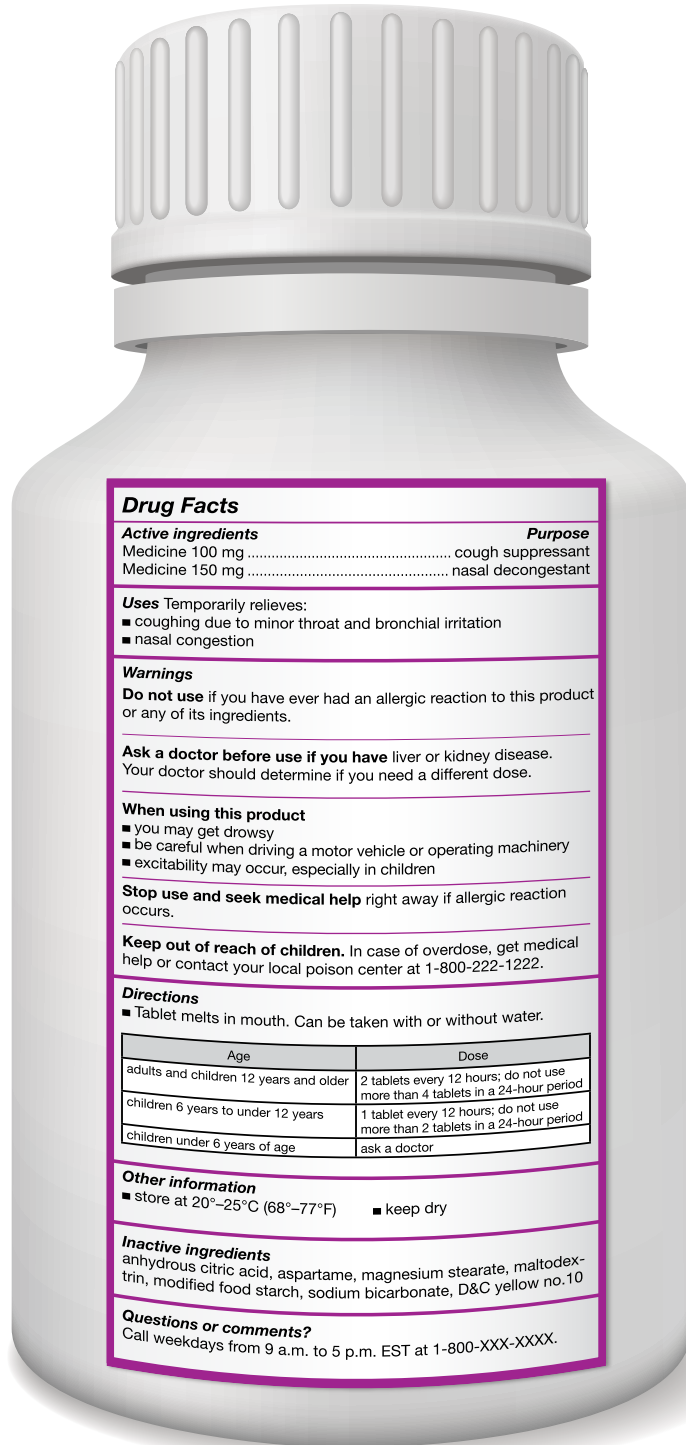


### Conclusion and At-Home Connection

After exploring the *Drug Facts* label—its purpose, the components of the label, why your students and their families should be familiar with it—advise students that you'll be moving on to the importance of using the appropriate medicine measuring tools and safe storage in Lesson 3. Send home the Family Newsletter resource available in the Families Section at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](https://www.scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents) so students may continue the discussion at home. Encourage students to check out the [digital storybook The Perfect Project](#), discuss what they have learned about the Poison Help number, to post the number in a visible place in their home, and to get family members to save the number in their mobile phones.

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

## LABEL COMPREHENSION



This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

Directions: Think about the discussions you've been having in class about over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and the issues that can arise from not reading and understanding the *Drug Facts* label. Use the sample label pictured here in order to answer the comprehension questions below on the back of this sheet.

### Questions

1. What kind of information might be found in the "Do Not Use" section under "Warnings"? Why is it important for someone to see that information?
2. Are there any side effects associated with the use of this medicine?
3. According to information on this label, what are some reasons that someone might have to contact a doctor before or after giving this medicine?
4. According to information on this label, what are steps to be taken to properly give the correct dose?
5. What is the poison center phone number?

**Did you know?** In 2013, poison centers managed over 250,000 exposure cases in children ages 6 to 19; over half of these cases involved medication errors and misuse. **READ ABOUT IT AT:** [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org).

## LESSON 3: Medicine Measuring Tools and Storage

**Teachers:** Before each lesson in the *OTC Medicine Safety* program, inform students that they should never take medicine without the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.

### Objectives

- Identify information found in dosing instructions on *Drug Facts* labels (when, how, and how often to take the medicine).
- Explain the importance of reading and understanding dosing information.
- Understand why using proper dosing tools is important.
- Discuss possible consequences of not following dosing instructions.
- Describe what makes a location safe or unsafe for medicine storage.
- Identify potential consequences of unsafe medicine storage.
- Brainstorm ways students can talk to family members about safe medicine storage.

### Materials:

- Student Worksheet 3
- Pediatric medicine bottle filled with colored water
- Dosing device that came with pediatric medicine
- Adult medicine bottle filled with different-colored water
- Dosing device that came with adult medicine
- Kitchen spoons (of different sizes)
- Student Worksheet 5
- Paper and pen or pencil
- *OTC Medicine Safety's* family newsletter resource
- Internet access (optional, for lesson Extension)

Visit the homepage at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety) for additional lesson plans and a variety of resources to support these discussions both inside the classroom and at home.

**Time:** One 40-minute class period

**Technology Connection:** [Up and Away](#); [Safe Kids Worldwide's Safe Storage, Safe Dosing, Safe Kids video](#).

Download Classroom Poster: [Drug Facts label](#).

### Key Vocabulary

- **Dose or dosage:** The term “dose” refers to the amount of medicine that you should take or administer to a member of your family—as indicated by the “Directions” section of the *Drug Facts* label.
- **Dosing device:** A dosing device is the syringe, cup, or other receptacle that is packaged with your over-the-counter (OTC) medicine, meant specifically for use with that medicine. Dosing devices are customized to each medicine—you should never substitute a dosing device with kitchen spoons or any other household measuring device.

### Lesson Steps

1. Begin with a class discussion about the importance of using the right tools when measuring different things. Ask students:

Q: *If I wanted to measure how far it is from the school to my house, would I use a ruler? Why or why not?*

Q: *What are some different ways that people make mistakes when measuring things out?*

## LESSON 3: Medicine Measuring Tools and Storage

2. Encourage students to think about why accurate measurements are important. Ask:

Q: *When is it okay to get less-accurate measurements or even to estimate?*

Q: *When is it important to get really accurate measurements? Why?*

3. Ask students to think back to Lesson 2: Reading and Understanding the *Drug Facts* Label.

Q: *Do you remember which section of the label talks about how much medicine to take?*

Discuss different information contained in the Directions section of the Drug Facts label (amount of medicine to take, how often to take the medicine, and how to take it). If you deem it appropriate, display the classroom poster of the [Drug Facts label](#). Explain that students are going to learn why reading and understanding dosing instructions is important, and why medicines should always be measured using the proper dosing devices under adult supervision.

4. Show students the different medicine bottles (filled with colored water) and measuring devices.
5. Read dosing information for the pediatric medicine. Then try to measure out the correct dose using the dosing devices that are not meant for the pediatric medicine. Reflect on the results. Next, measure out the dose using the correct dosing device. Discuss with the class why using the correct device is important.
6. Repeat activity with adult medicine, but try to measure it out with devices that are too small for the correct dose. Reiterate the potential dangers of using the wrong device and why using the correct one is important.
7. Show students a medicine bottle that recommends a dose of 2 teaspoons of medicine. Then take out a handful of different-size household spoons, the kind that students might find in their kitchen drawers at home. Measure out 2 spoonfuls of “medicine” into any of the spoons, pouring the measured liquid into a dosing cup that has an accurate measurement for 2 teaspoons. Discuss the discrepancy with the class.
8. Distribute Student Worksheet 3.
9. Have students complete the worksheet; this can either be done individually or you can lead the class and work through it together, discussing each example.
10. Talk about how measuring doses incorrectly (measuring out tablespoons instead of teaspoons, for example) can cause an overdose or underdose. **Reinforce the importance of always communicating with a trusted adult before taking any medicine.** Connect this discussion with a brief introduction to safe storage, which, when ignored, may lead to accidental ingestion and medicine poisoning.
11. Ask students to name the locations where medicines are stored in their households. Write answers on the board for students to refer to later. Common answers may include kitchen cabinets, bathroom cabinets, or parents’ or trusted adult’s bedroom.
12. As students answer, ask for specifics.

Q: *Are the medicines in drawers or cabinets or on the countertop?*  
Q: *Are the medicines easy for young children to see or reach?*

Get students thinking about how easy it is for young children in the house to find them. Explain that medicines need to be kept out of reach and sight of their naturally curious younger brothers and sisters, or young visitors to their home.
13. If using a whiteboard, visit [upandaway.org](http://upandaway.org) to learn more, and as a class, watch the [Safe Kids video](#) and discuss the key messages.
14. Distribute Student Worksheet 5. Explain to students that they are looking at the inside of a home and it is their job to identify the medicine storage errors that could lead to accidental medicine poisoning.



## LESSON 3: Medicine Measuring Tools and Storage

15. After the students have completed their worksheets, continue the discussion.

Q: *What did you learn about safe storage?*

Q: *Is there anything from today's discussion that might be important to mention at home?*



**Extension:** Give students an assignment to create an idea for an app that can help families remember all of the ways to make a home medicine-safe. Research for the app idea may involve connecting with a local health expert (pharmacist, nurse, etc.) or an expert from an organization similar to Safe Kids via email for insight.

### Conclusion and At-Home Connection

After you've discussed safe storage of OTC medicines as well as being mindful of the importance of reading and understanding dosing information, explain that you'll be moving on to misuse in Lesson 4. Send home the Family Newsletter resource available in the Families Section at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](https://www.scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents) so students may continue the discussion at home. Encourage students to discuss what they have learned about the Poison Help number, to post the number in a visible place in their homes, and to get family members to save the number in their mobile phones.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

Directions: Below is a sample dosing table for an over-the-counter (OTC) medicine, similar to the information you can find on a *Drug Facts* label. Use the table as well as your knowledge about medicine safety to answer the questions below.

Children under 6 years of age	Ask a doctor
Children 6 to under 12 years of age	2.5 mL ( $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful) two times per day; do not give more than 5 mL (1 teaspoonful) in 24 hours
Adults and children 12 years of age and over	5 mL (1 teaspoonful) two times per day; do not take more than 10 mL (2 teaspoonfuls) in 24 hours
Adults 65 years of age and over	5 mL (1 teaspoonful) two times per day; do not take more than 10 mL (2 teaspoonfuls) in 24 hours

## QUESTIONS

1. Olivia is 12 years old and took her first dose of medicine at 8 a.m. She took a second dose at 3 p.m. the same day. By the evening, she is still not feeling better. Based on the label above, when can Olivia's parents give her another dose of this medicine?

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2. What might happen if someone taking this medicine used a household kitchen spoon to dose instead of the measuring device that came with the medicine?

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3. What are some reasons a *Drug Facts* label might include instructions for certain people to ask a doctor before using the medicine?

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4. Why is it important to always discuss medicine dosing with a parent or trusted adult?

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5. How can you use what you've learned today about dosing to help your family use OTC medicines more safely?

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**Did you know?** It wasn't until 1999 that the FDA standardized the *Drug Facts* label found on all OTC medicines to ensure that consumers can easily and quickly identify how to take a medicine, who should take the medicine, the purpose of the medicine, and more. **READ ABOUT IT AT:** [www.fda.gov/Drugs/Resourcesforyou](http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/Resourcesforyou).

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 5

Directions: Circle the six medicine storage errors in this picture. On the back of this sheet, describe safe storage solutions for the medicines pictured below to help make this home safer.



ANSWERS: 1. bottle of cough medicine on the counter and a teaspoon with a trace of medicine visible on spoon (should be put up and away); 2. medicine left out on the nightstand with dosage cup; 3. allergy medicine next to vase; 4. toiletry bag hanging low from doorknob inside closet; 5. medicine bottles visible and accessible inside kitchen cabinet below accessible and accessible inside kitchen sink; 6. open purse with multivitamin bottle sticking out of the top.

## LESSON 4: Medicines and Misuse

**Teachers:** Before each lesson in the *OTC Medicine Safety* program, inform students that they should never take medicine without the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.

### Objectives

- Define “misuse” as it relates to over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.
- Understand why misusing OTC medicines can be harmful.
- Identify the steps to take when encountering an OTC medicine misuse situation.

### Materials:

- Student Worksheet 4
- [Slides for pre-activity](#)
- Whiteboard or slide projector
- *OTC Medicine Safety*'s family newsletter resource
- Internet access (optional, for lesson Extension)

Visit the homepage at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety) for additional lesson plans and a variety of resources to support these discussions both inside the classroom and at home.

**Time:** One 40-minute class period

**Technology Connection:** Lesson Extension: Encourage Students to Develop a Photo or Video Documentary of the Subject Matter. [Download: Slides for Activity](#); [Web Resource: DrugFacts: Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications, National Institute on Drug Abuse](#); [Download: Culminating Activities](#).

### Key Vocabulary

- **Misuse:** (as it pertains to OTC medicine): Taking an OTC medicine in a manner other than what is directed by the *Drug Facts* label or a doctor.

### Lesson Steps

#### PART 1

1. After completing Lessons 1–3, students will have foundational knowledge about OTC medicines, the *Drug Facts* label, and the importance of using the dosing device that comes with the medicine.
2. Begin this lesson by prompting an open class discussion:  
*Q: Do you think OTC medicines are dangerous if they are misused—meaning used in a manner other than what is directed by the Drug Facts label or a doctor?*  
Allow students to offer opinions. Through a show of hands, tally the “yes” versus “no” opinions on the board. Inform students that by the end of this lesson, the class will revisit the question.
3. Help illuminate how students’ preconceived ideas can sometimes cloud the real facts about a topic. Reinforce this idea by [showing three slides](#) (sun, potatoes, and vitamins—see an explanation below). At the end, you’ll ask students:  
*Q: How are these three items related?*  
(Answer: All are okay when used or stored properly and used in moderation, but when they are not, all can have detrimental health effects.)
4. Afterward, go back in the slide show and uncover the answers beneath each item.

## LESSON 4: Medicines and Misuse

### SLIDE #1: Sun

**ANSWER:** Fifteen minutes of sun per day is essential for maintaining a healthy level of vitamin D, which promotes the retention of calcium, mostly in your bones. Calcium is very important in the development of your bones and teeth. Too much sun, however, may cause skin damage or even skin cancer. To protect against damage from the sun's rays, avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when its rays are strongest; wear protective clothing, and use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.\*\*

**Now you know:** Use a good sunscreen when outdoors for more than 15 minutes and avoid prolonged sun exposure.

[\*Source: American Skin Association]

### SLIDE #2: Potatoes

**ANSWER:** Potatoes are an excellent source of carbohydrates, which your body needs for energy. But potatoes naturally contain solanine, a toxic ingredient that can cause a number of health problems. Solanine thrives in well-lit environments and is present when you see a green tinge under the potato's skin and experience a bitter taste.

**Now you know:** Store potatoes in a cool, dark place and be on the lookout for discoloration and bad taste.

### SLIDE #3: Vitamins

**ANSWER:** Vitamins can be purchased over the counter and are widely available. They're easy to access, but can have risks if not used appropriately. They should be taken under the guidance of a parent or trusted adult. Vitamins can be dangerous if they're misused or if a person isn't using them in accordance with the *Supplement Facts* label on the bottle.

**Now you know:** Read the label and talk to a trusted adult before taking vitamins.

## PART 2

1. Discuss how these three items are common in our lives and appear safe, but there are specific guidelines for using or consuming them. If you do not follow the safety precautions for proper use and storage, there could be harmful consequences. Explain that when you dig a little deeper, you often discover new information that you might ordinarily overlook.

**Now Ask:** *Can you think of other items you come in contact with regularly that are safe when used properly, but dangerous when misused?* (Answers may include: appliances, cars, medicines, cleaning supplies, etc.)

2. Select medicine as a topic for further discussion. Have students reflect on these questions. Is it dangerous or safe to:
  - not read and follow the *Drug Facts* label?
  - take more than the recommended dose?
  - redose more frequently than directed on the label?
  - use more than one medicine with the same active ingredient at the same time?
  - take medicines for longer than directed on the label?
  - take medicines for reasons or symptoms other than what is directed on the label?

## LESSON 4: Medicines and Misuse

- The answer to all of these questions is “dangerous” because there are very real and potentially dangerous consequences when someone misuses OTC medicines. The *Drug Facts* label provides instructions for using the medicine safely. OTC medicines can be harmful if misused or if not used as directed by the *Drug Facts* label.
- Ask students:

Q: *What is the perception among your friends about misusing prescription or OTC medicines?*

(Answers may include: Misusing prescription drugs is dangerous and can be deadly; no one really gets hurt from misusing OTC medicines.)

Q: *Based on the information you’ve learned in OTC Medicine Safety, do you believe that there is a need to inform people about the dangers of misusing OTC medicines?*
- Distribute Student Worksheet 4, and invite students to conduct research for their writing via *OTC Medicine Safety* or an additional web resource, such as [this page](#) from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Explain to students that this worksheet can be used to launch a larger community-wide campaign. A coalition of families, students, and community leaders can show collective support for making their communities and schools safer places for children and their families. A coalition will help to increase and disseminate information within the school and community about the safe use and storage of OTC medicines and the dangers of misuse. Students can work with their families and neighbors to submit a collection of letters to local town officials and leaders that encourage getting the word out about safe medicine use.



**Extension:** Discuss the impact of visuals or videos in helping to increase the safe use and storage of OTC medicines, and assign a photo or video documentary that deals with taking safety precautions at home.

### Conclusion and At-Home Connection

After you’ve introduced the concept of “misuse” as it pertains to OTC medicines, reviewed the importance of understanding the Drug Facts label, and explained that safety precautions for proper use and storage are critical, tell students that you’ll be moving on to the program’s [Culminating Activities](#). Send home the Family Newsletter resource available in the Families’ section at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents), so students may continue the discussion at home. Encourage students to discuss what they have learned about the Poison Help number, to post the number in a visible place in their home, and to get family members to save the number in their mobile phones.

**Sources:** National Institute on Drug Abuse. DrugFacts: Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications



LESSON PLAN

# Informational Text Features: OTC Medicine Safety



**Objectives:**

- ▶ Identify the central idea and key details of an informational text
- ▶ Create text features to enhance an informational text

**Time:** One 45-minute class period

**Materials:**

- ▶ [Student Article \(PDF\)](#)
- ▶ [Student Worksheet \(PDF\)](#)
- ▶ Poster: [Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety \(PDF\)](#)
- ▶ Whiteboard Image: [Chart of Text Features](#)
- ▶ Reproducible Image: [Text Features Options](#)
- ▶ Pen or pencil per student
- ▶ If available: Whiteboard/projector

Visit [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety) for additional lesson plans and a variety of resources to support these discussions both inside the classroom and at home.

**Lesson Steps:**

1. Tell students that they will be reading an article about medicine safety. Ask them what they already know about the topic of medicine—purposes of medicines, types of medicines, medicine safety, etc. Create a word splash on the board to record students' ideas.
2. After students brainstorm their ideas, be sure to inform students that they should only take medicine with the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.
3. Explain that students are going to read an article that includes a lot of information about medicine safety, but that the article is missing many text features that would help the reader understand the text.
4. Review the relevant text features (title, section heading, pull-out quote, diagram, and glossary). Refer to the [Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety poster \(PDF\)](#) to review some of the text features while also previewing the content of the article. Alternatively, refer to an informational article the class has read recently, or a free sample issue from [junior.scholastic.com](http://junior.scholastic.com).

If needed, the following chart can be used to review the relevant text features. Encourage students to share their ideas about the uses for each text feature before revealing each row. [\[Download image for whiteboard\]](#)

5. Distribute the informational article about OTC medicine safety with blank gaps in place of text features. Students should imagine that they are editors who are preparing the article to be published, and they want to make sure that all of the text features will help readers understand the key ideas in the article.
6. If necessary, provide students who need more support with options for the text features. [\[Download image of chart to distribute\]](#)
7. After students have finished reading the article and adding their text features, ask them to complete the accompanying worksheet. They will need to explain their choices for the text features they filled in, as well as answer a series of critical-thinking questions on the content of the article.

**Extension: PSA/Poster Activity**

Explain to students that they will now have a chance to create a public service announcement (PSA) or poster to share the key information from the article and worksheet with the rest of the school community.

If desired, provide examples and templates from the “Spread the Word” section at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/community](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/community).

Explain that some PSAs or posters will be selected to hang in the nurse’s office, main office, or hallway. For students who find competition invigorating, this activity could culminate in a class vote for the top entry, or top five entries, to be showcased (especially if wall space is at a premium). Alternately, a new group of posters could be showcased each week until all entries have had a chance to be in the spotlight.

**Family Connection:** Visit [scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/families](http://scholastic.com/otcmedsafety/families) for take-home options.

**Related Resources:** View other [lesson plans](#), a [classroom poster](#), and more on the [OTC Medicine Safety teacher page](#).





<b>Text Feature</b>	<b>Why a Writer Would Use It</b>	<b>How It Can Help the Reader</b>
<b>Title</b>	Emphasize the central idea of the entire article Get the reader's attention	Start to understand the main idea
<b>Section Heading</b>	Emphasize the main idea of a section of the article	Predict the main idea of the section
<b>Pull-Out Quote</b>	Emphasize a particular fact or experience Get the reader's attention	Notice a key detail from the text Start to understand the tone of the article
<b>Diagram</b>	Illustrate and show the parts of a concept	Visualize the parts of an important idea
<b>Glossary</b>	Emphasize key terms	Identify key terms Reinforce the meaning of new vocabulary

<b>Text Features: Options</b>	
<p><b><u>Title</u></b></p> <p>Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety Types of Medications What Doctors Don't Tell You</p>	<p><b><u>Section Heading 1</u></b></p> <p>Medicine Ingredients Always Follow Directions The Importance of the <i>Drug Facts</i> label</p>
<p><b><u>Section Heading 2</u></b></p> <p>Getting the Right Dose Different Dosing Devices How to Dispose of Medicines</p>	<p><b><u>Section Heading 3</u></b></p> <p>Poison Help Taking Medicine Safely What to Do in an Emergency</p>

**Directions:** You are an editor preparing this article for publishing. Read the article, and help future readers understand the key ideas by using your critical-thinking skills to fill in the blank text features.



## OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

(add title)

### What you need to know to make sure that medicines help instead of hurt

Did you know that 10,000 children end up in emergency rooms each year because of medicine errors? Luckily, most of these errors can be prevented. Learn how you can help keep yourself and your family members safe!

#### Know the Facts: Over-the-Counter vs. Prescription Medicines

Medicines fall into two major categories: *Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine* is bought in a drugstore or supermarket without the need for a doctor's prescription. *Prescription medicine*, on the other hand, is specially ordered by a doctor or nurse practitioner and is available only from a pharmacist. Only the person whose name is on the prescription should take that medicine.

Despite these differences, there are important safety guidelines that OTC and prescription medicines share. First, children should use these medicines only with the permission of a parent or trusted adult. Also, it is always important to read the medicine label before each use. It is dangerous to misuse or abuse *any* type of medicine.

(add illustration or diagram)

(add section heading)

How can you be sure you're taking an OTC medicine safely? Every OTC medicine includes a *Drug Facts* label, which is required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The *Drug Facts* label helps you understand the medicine, who should take it, and how to take it safely. These sections are on each *Drug Facts* label:

- ▶ **ACTIVE INGREDIENTS:** Lists the ingredients in the medicine that make it work.
- ▶ **USES:** Describes the symptoms that the medicine treats.
- ▶ **WARNINGS:** Lists safety information including side effects, questions you may need to ask a doctor before use, and which medicines to avoid taking at the same time.
- ▶ **DIRECTIONS:** Indicates the amount or dose of medicine to take, how often to take it, and how much you can take in one day.
- ▶ **OTHER INFORMATION:** Explains how to store it.
- ▶ **INACTIVE INGREDIENTS:** Lists ingredients not intended to treat symptoms (e.g., preservatives). These can be important in the case of an allergy.
- ▶ **QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?:** Provides the phone number for the company if you have questions.

(add section heading)

Remember the story of Goldilocks and the three bears? She needed the porridge to be "just right." Like Goldilocks, you need the "just right" dose of a medicine. Too little medicine may not be effective; too much medicine can cause you harm. Luckily, researchers have already figured out the appropriate dose that each person needs based on age, weight, and other factors. You can find this information in the "Directions" section of the *Drug Facts* label.

To take the correct dose of a medicine, always use the dosing device that is provided (often a small cup for a liquid). Dosing devices are customized to each medicine—you should never substitute a dosing device with kitchen spoons or any other household measuring device.

(add pull-out quote)



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## (add section heading)

Some people might think that because a medicine is available over the counter, it cannot cause any harm. However, misusing any medicine by not reading and following the medicine label carefully can lead to serious consequences. For example, certain ingredients may cause allergic reactions. Also, certain medicines can interact with other medicines and may cause side effects or harm when mixed. **Many medicines contain the same kind of active ingredients, so it's important to not take them at the same time.** Furthermore, medicines will not work properly if not taken at the proper dose!

What should you do if you think that you or someone else has taken the wrong dose or wrong medicine, or if you just have questions about a medicine? Call the free and confidential **Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222**. Experts answer the phone year-round 24/7. Unlike 911, it doesn't have to be an emergency to call.

## Safe Storage and Safe Disposal

If you have any younger siblings or small children in your life, you know that kids are naturally curious. That is why it is so important to make sure that all medicines are stored up, away, and out of sight.

When your family cleans out the medicine cabinet, be

sure to follow the FDA's guidelines for safe disposal of medicines. Mix OTCs with a substance people wouldn't want to eat (e.g., kitty litter) and then place the mix in a closed container (e.g., sealed baggie) in the trash.

## Be Part of the Solution

In 2015, poison centers reported more than 80,000 cases involving medicine-dosing errors in children 12 and younger. Help eliminate this danger! Educate your family and community about medicine safety—and remember to always take medicine with the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.

## Glossary

\_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ :

## Think It Through *Record your responses on a separate sheet of paper.*

### Part I **Text Features: Explain Your Reasoning**

While you read this article, you were thinking as both a reader and a writer. Explain the text features you chose to add, being sure to support your ideas with evidence from the text.

1. Why did you select the words you included in the **glossary**?
2. Choose one of your **section headings**. Explain why it fits the central idea of the section.
3. Describe the **diagram** or **illustration** you chose to include. How would this diagram help the reader understand the text?
4. Why is the **pull-out quote** that you chose so important to the central idea of the article?

### Part II **Critical-Thinking Questions**

Evaluate the following statements, using evidence from the text to explain your thinking.

1. Your sibling says, "It's not safe to measure cough syrup with a kitchen spoon, but this measuring spoon for baking is okay because it's made for measuring." Is your sibling right? How do you know?
2. Your younger sibling took some OTC medicine because she thought it looked like candy. You suggest calling the Poison Help number. Your babysitter says, "She doesn't look sick from it, so we should just wait and see if it's a real emergency." Is your babysitter right? How do you know?
3. Your friend has a headache, and his parent gives him a dose of an OTC pain medicine. Later, he says, "It's been 30 minutes and I don't feel any better. My mom must not have given me enough medicine—I should probably take another dose." Is your friend right? How do you know?



# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY FOR FAMILIES

Modeled after the FDA's *Medicines in My Home* program

**Did you know that there may be over-the-counter (OTC) medicine dangers in your home that could harm your children?**

In class, we've started a new unit called *OTC Medicine Safety*. As part of our health education studies, this unit teaches students about OTC medicine safety. Open this guide to learn why it is important to inspect your home for OTC medicine hazards and to find easy-to-use tips to make your home safer for your entire family.

**Download more FREE resources:** [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](https://www.scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents)



Support for the development of this education material was provided by



**All program materials  
are FREE.**



# WHAT'S YOUR FAMILY'S MEDICINE ACTION PLAN?

As parents, we spend so much time preparing our children for the real world and teaching them the life skills they need to stay informed and safe.

It may sound odd at first to have a medicine action plan for your family, but consider this:

**“Students begin to self-medicate around 11 years old. Unfortunately, when not equipped with the knowledge and information to make safe choices, adolescents may end up doing more harm than good.”\***

Creating an action plan is one way to know that you are using and storing medicines safely in your home. Get your whole family involved by talking about over-the-counter (OTC) medicine safety. Follow these steps to guide your discussion:

1. Use the checklist below to inspect your home for OTC medicine hazards.
2. Create an action plan.
3. Practice your plan and continue conversations all year long.

All of these resources and more are available for FREE:  
**[scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents)**



## Our OTC Medicine Safety Checklist

- Read and follow the *Drug Facts* label every time.
- Measure carefully. Keep the medicine and the dosing device it comes with together. Never use household spoons to measure medicine.
- Check that all medicines, vitamins, and supplements are stored up, away, and out of sight of young children.
- Ensure that the child safety caps are locked on all medicines.
- Remind visitors to keep luggage, pocketbooks, or anything else that might have medicines in it out of children's reach and sight.
- Medicines should not be taken without the supervision of an adult.
- Make sure your children know that using OTC and prescription medicines incorrectly can cause harm.
- Program the Poison Help number into your phone: **1-800-222-1222**.



**VIDEO ROOM:** Watch this series of informational videos created by the FDA to teach your family about using medicines safely. Click on “Video Room” here: [fda.gov/medsinmyhome](http://fda.gov/medsinmyhome).

## Emergency Contacts

Post these numbers in a prominent place in your home. Remember to save them into your cell phone in case of emergency.

### Family Doctor:

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME AND PHONE NUMBER

### Pharmacy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME AND PHONE NUMBER

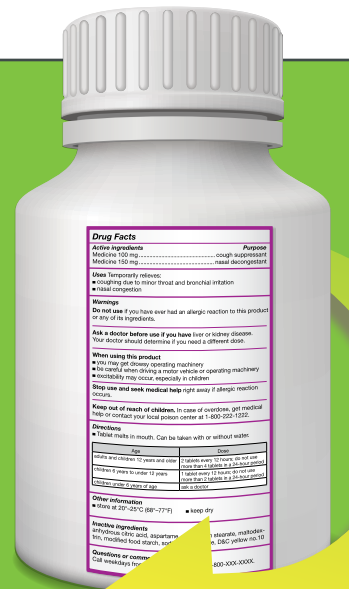


Poison Help Number:  
**1-800-222-1222**

Open 24 hours a day every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential.

# WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.



The **Uses** section of the label tells you the symptoms the medicine treats.

Look in the **Warnings** section to learn about what other medicines you should not take with this medicine, side effects the medicine can cause, when you should ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and other important safety information like when to stop taking the medicine and talk to a doctor.

The **Directions** section of the label tells you the amount of medicine (dose) you can take, how often you can take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

Some medicines also have a **Questions or Comments?** section of the label that gives you the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

The **Active Ingredients** section of the label tells you the names of the active ingredients in the medicine and what jobs they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress cough). Some medicines may have more than one active ingredient.

In the **Other Information** section of the label you'll find other things you need to know such as how to store the medicine.

You'll find a list of any preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms in the **Inactive Ingredients** section on the **Drug Facts** label. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

## Drug Facts

<b>Active Ingredients</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Medicine 100 mg .....	cough suppressant
Medicine 150 mg .....	nasal decongestant

**Uses** Temporarily relieves:

- coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation
- nasal congestion

**Warnings**

**Do not use** if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.

---

**Ask a doctor before use if you have** liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.

---

**When using this product**

- you may get drowsy
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

---

**Stop use and seek medical help** right away if allergic reaction occurs.

---

**Keep out of reach of children.** In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

**Directions**

- Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.

Age	Dose
adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period
children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period
children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor

---

**Other Information**

- store at 20°–25° C (68°–77° F)    ■ keep dry

---

**Inactive Ingredients**

anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no. 10

---

**Questions or Comments?**

Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

This is not an actual Drug Facts label.

## OTC MEDICINE FACTS

1. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
2. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
3. Always use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
4. Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same active ingredient.
5. All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up, away, and out of sight after every use.



### ASK FOR HELP

Poison centers are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential. Program the Poison Help number into your phone:

1-800-222-1222

► Download a FREE mini-poster of the *Drug Facts* label: [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety)

**FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #1 • READ THE LABEL FIRST**

# WHY THE LABEL MATTERS

The *Drug Facts* label appears on all over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, which can be purchased from stores without a doctor's prescription, from mouthwash to pain medicines to sunscreen. *Drug Facts* is a standardized label on OTC medicines required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It helps you understand the purpose of the OTC medicines that your family members take, who should take these medicines, and how these medicines should be taken safely. Below is a summary of each *Drug Facts* section.

► **1. ACTIVE INGREDIENTS**

The names of the active ingredients and what they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress coughing). Some medicines have more than one active ingredient.

► **2. USES**

The symptoms the medicine treats.

► **3. WARNINGS**

Other medicines that should not be taken with this medicine, side effects the medicine can cause, and other important safety information.

► **4. DIRECTIONS**

The amount of medicine (dose) you should take, how often you should take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

<b>Drug Facts</b>									
<b>1 Active ingredients</b>	<b>Purpose</b> Medicine 100 mg ..... cough suppressant Medicine 150 mg ..... nasal decongestant								
<b>2 Uses</b>	Temporarily relieves: ■ coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation ■ nasal congestion								
<b>3 Warnings</b>	<b>Do not use</b> if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients.  <b>Ask a doctor before use if you have</b> liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose.  <b>When using this product</b> ■ you may get drowsy ■ be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery ■ excitability may occur, especially in children  <b>Stop use and seek medical help</b> right away if allergic reaction occurs.  <b>Keep out of reach of children.</b> In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.								
<b>4 Directions</b>	■ Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>Dose</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>adults and children 12 years and older</td> <td>2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period</td> </tr> <tr> <td>children 6 years to under 12 years</td> <td>1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period</td> </tr> <tr> <td>children under 6 years of age</td> <td>ask a doctor</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	Dose	adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period	children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period	children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor
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<b>5 Other information</b>	■ store at 20°–25°C (68°–77°F)    ■ keep dry								
<b>6 Inactive ingredients</b>	anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no. 10								
<b>7 Questions or comments?</b>	Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.								

This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

► **5. OTHER INFORMATION**

Other things you need to know, such as how to store the medicine.

► **6. INACTIVE INGREDIENTS**

A list of preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

► **7. QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?**

For some medicines, a section that provides the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

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**ASK FOR HELP**  
Program the Poison Help Number  
Into Your Phone: **1-800-222-1222**

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**FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #2 • SAFE DOSING**

# KNOW THE DOSE

## MEASURE CAREFULLY

Accuracy is important when it comes to taking medicine, or when you're giving medicine to family members. When the recommended *dose* is not followed, medicines may not work the way they are meant to or may result in an overdose.

► **Tip #1:**

**Take time to read the label and understand what's in the medicine:** Follow the directions on your child's medicine closely. Know the active ingredients and that two or more medicines with the same active ingredient may lead to an overdose or cause harm.

► **Tip #2:**

**Many children's medicines provide dosing instructions based on weight and age:** Look at the Directions section of the *Drug Facts* label to determine the appropriate dose.

► **Tip #3:**

**Always use the dosing device that comes with the medicine:** Even if the units of measure on the dosing devices that come with different medicines are the same—they are not interchangeable. Dosing devices are customized to the medicine, and use of other devices or household measurement tools (such as teaspoons or kitchen spoons) may cause you to misdose medicine.

► **Tip #4:**

**More is not better and could cause harm:** Giving your child more than the recommended dose of medicine does not mean he or she is going to get better faster, and it could have adverse effects. So be sure to read and follow the label each time.

► **Tip #5:**

**Never give adult medicines to children:** Some OTC medicines are not intended for use by children and could cause harm.

► **Tip #6:**

**Communication among caregivers is crucial:** In 2013, poison centers reported over 70,000 cases involving medication-dosing errors in children 12 and younger, and accidental "double dosing" was the leading cause of errors in this age group. Caregivers need clear instructions on exactly what medicine to give to your child, when your child should get the medicine, and the correct dose.

In 2013, poison centers reported over **70,000** cases involving medication-dosing errors in children 12 and younger.

—SOURCE: American Association of Poison Control Centers



### ASK FOR HELP

Program the Poison Help Number  
Into Your Phone: **1-800-222-1222**

Support for the development of this education material was provided by





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**FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #3 • STORAGE AND DISPOSAL**

# UP, AWAY, AND OUT OF SIGHT

## STORAGE SMARTS

Every year more than 500,000 parents and caregivers call poison control centers because a child got into medicine or was given the wrong dose of medicine. That's almost one call every minute of every day.

► **Tip #1:**

To prevent medicine poisoning, store medicines up, away, and out of sight: When you're storing over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medicines and vitamins and supplements, select a spot that's high and out of the reach of children. Safe storage applies to both adult and children's medicines.

**FACT:** In 86% of emergency room visits for medicine poisoning, the child gets into medicine belonging to an adult.\*

► **Tip #2:**

Be aware of how and where children get into medicines: Kids get into medicines in many places, such as in purses and bags, or on counters or nightstands.

**FACT:** In 67% of medicine poisoning cases, the medicine was within reach of a child, such as in a purse, left on a counter or dresser, or found on the ground.\*

► **Tip #3:**

Products like diaper rash remedies or eyedrops that you might not think of as medicine need to be stored safely, too: Most parents understand the importance of storing medicines up and away, but may not safely store products that they might not think of as medicines.

► **Tip #4:**

When you have visitors, consider the medicines they might be bringing into the home: When you have guests, offer to secure any purses or bags they bring that may contain medicines.

**FACT:** In 43% of cases, the medicine a child gets into belonged to a relative, such as an aunt, uncle, or grandparent.\*

► **Tip #5:**

As soon as you've finished administering medicine, replace the cap tightly: Buy medicines with child-resistant packaging if possible, but remember, child-resistant does not mean childproof. Curious children may be able to get into medicine, so always return medicine to an up-and-away location after every use.

► **Tip #6:**

Clean out your medicine cabinet: To learn about safe ways to dispose of your medicines, visit the [Food and Drug Administration's guidelines](#) for medicine disposal, read the Drug Enforcement Administration's information on the [National Take-Back Initiative](#), or call your poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

More than **60,000** young children end up in emergency rooms every year because they get into medicines while their parent or caregiver is not looking.

—SOURCE: [upandaway.org](http://upandaway.org)

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### ASK FOR HELP

Program the Poison Help Number  
Into Your Phone: **1-800-222-1222**

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\*SOURCE: SAFE KIDS Worldwide ([www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)) <http://issuu.com/safekids/docs/2013-medication-safety-report/1?e=4874392/2095890>.

► Download other FREE resource sheets: [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/parents)

**FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #4 • OTC MEDICINE MISUSE**

# MISUSE IS DANGEROUS

## YOUNG PEOPLE AND MISUSE

In fifth and sixth grades, children are becoming more responsible for their self-care. It is important to monitor your children and reinforce that they should not be taking over-the-counter (OTC) medicines without adult supervision. In situations where children are required to take medicines regularly, parents should continue to monitor use. Even children who take medicines daily may make errors in dose or dosing frequency.

Create a learning environment that encourages discussion about responsible medicine use and positions healthcare professionals as the go-to resource for questions and concerns.

OTC medicines can be harmful if misused or not used responsibly. This can include:

- Not reading and following the *Drug Facts* label
- Taking more than the labeled dose, or redosing medicine more frequently than directed on the label
- Using more than one medicine with the same active ingredient at the same time, which can lead to an overdose
- Taking medicines for longer than directed on the label
- Taking medicines for reasons or symptoms other than what is directed on the label

When it comes to taking medicine, more doesn't necessarily mean better. If your symptoms don't get better or new symptoms appear, contact a doctor. Take the time to fully understand the medicine that you're taking, read the *Drug Facts* label, and call your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist with questions.

**For more information about preventing medicine misuse, visit**  
[consumermedsafety.org/OTC-drug-abuse](http://consumermedsafety.org/OTC-drug-abuse)

Medicine errors and misuse of commonly available over-the-counter medications result in approximately **10,000** emergency room visits for kids under 18 each year.

—SOURCE: *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 2009



**ASK FOR HELP**  
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# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

## CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

PRESENTED TO

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In recognition of your completion of the *OTC MEDICINE SAFETY* program and to commend your having demonstrated an understanding of its principles:

- ▶ Identify the differences between prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines
- ▶ Understand the importance of the *Drug Facts* label; to identify its sections; to use the label's information under the supervision of a parent or trusted adult
- ▶ Distinguish between safe and unsafe storage locations for OTC medicines
- ▶ Understand that using OTC medicines irresponsibly can cause harm
- ▶ Recognize unsafe situations involving OTC medicines and use problem-solving skills to brainstorm solutions
- ▶ Identify the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222)

