



LESSON 4: Exploring the Harms of Medicine Misuse

Students will learn about the misuses of medicine and how to use them responsibly.

Students will learn that misusing medicine can be harmful.

Grades: 5 and 6

Duration: 40 minutes

Pre-instructional Planning

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- 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.

Note: 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.

MATERIALS

- OTC Medicine Safety for the Community printable
- OTC Medicine Safety Answer Key printable
- Culminating Student Activities printable
- Medicine Misuse Activity Pages printable
- Computer and projector

- OTC Medicine Safety’s Family Newsletter printable
- **Optional:** Computer with Internet access for student use

During Instruction

SET UP

1. 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.
2. Set up your computer and a projector to show students the Medicine Misuse Activity Pages printable.
3. Make copies of the printables for each student in your class. If you don’t want to project the Medicine Misuse Activity Pages printable, make copies of this as well.

LESSON DIRECTIONS

Part 1

Step 1: Begin this lesson by prompting an open class discussion:

- **Do you think OTC medicines are dangerous if they are misused, or 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.

Step 2: Help illuminate how students’ preconceived ideas can sometimes cloud the real facts about a topic. Reinforce this idea by projecting (or distributing) the Medicine Misuse Activity Pages (sun, potatoes, vitamins, and ibuprofen). Do not reveal the “Answer” or “Now You Know” sections on each slide. At the end, ask students:

- **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.

Step 3: Afterward, go back through the Medicine Misuse Activity Pages printable and uncover the answers beneath each item.

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.

SLIDE #4: Ibuprofen

ANSWER: Ibuprofen has been used for decades for pain relief and is available over the counter. When ibuprofen is used as directed, it reduces inflammation (swelling) and can reduce fevers. However, large doses of ibuprofen can cause damage to the stomach or intestines.

Now you know: Follow directions on the Drug Facts label and talk to a trusted adult before taking an anti-inflammatory medicine.

PART 2

Step 1: Discuss how the three items from the Medicine Misuse Activity Pages 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.

Ask students:

- **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.

Step 2: Select medicine as a topic for further discussion. Post the following questions on chart paper around the room. Have students rotate to the six stations and write down their responses to this prompt:

- **Are the following actions safe or dangerous?**
- **What negative effects could result from:**
 - Not reading and following the Drug Facts label?
 - Taking more than the recommended dose?
 - Redosing more frequently than directed on the label?
 - Using more than one medicine with the same kind of active ingredient at the same time?
 - Taking medicines for longer than directed on the label?
 - Taking medicines for reasons or symptoms other than what is directed on the label?

If students have access to technology, they could quickly research the negative effects as they rotate through the stations. Alternatively, students could brainstorm ideas with a partner, then share their answers with the entire class.

Step 3: During the discussion of students' responses, make sure that students understand that all of these scenarios are 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.

Step 4: Ask students:

- **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.

- **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?**

Step 5: Distribute OTC Medicine Safety for the Community printable and invite students to conduct research for their writing via OTC Medicine Safety or an additional web resource. 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.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

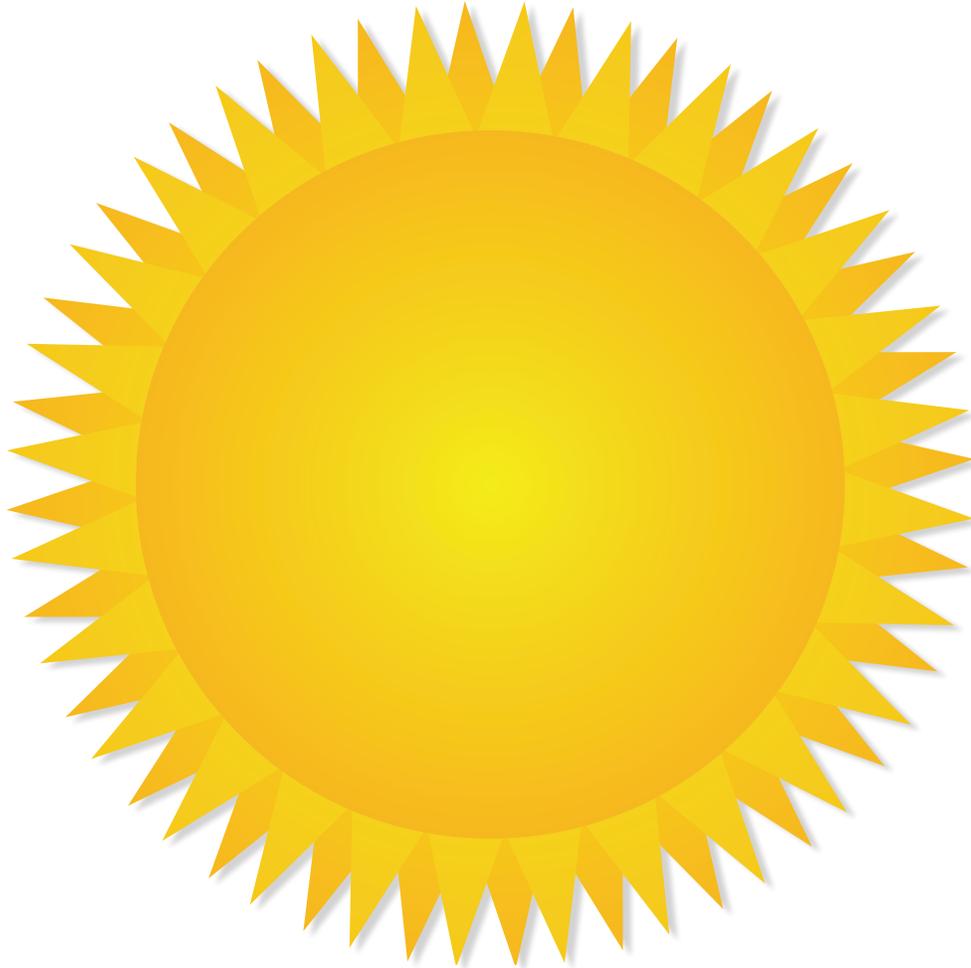
Discuss the impact of visuals or videos in helping to increase the safe use and storage of OTC medicines, and assign a photo or video documentary that deals with taking safety precautions at home.

HOME CONNECTIONS

1. 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 Student Activities printable.
2. Send home the OTC Medicine Safety's Family Newsletter printable 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.

LESSON 4

MEDICINE MISUSE



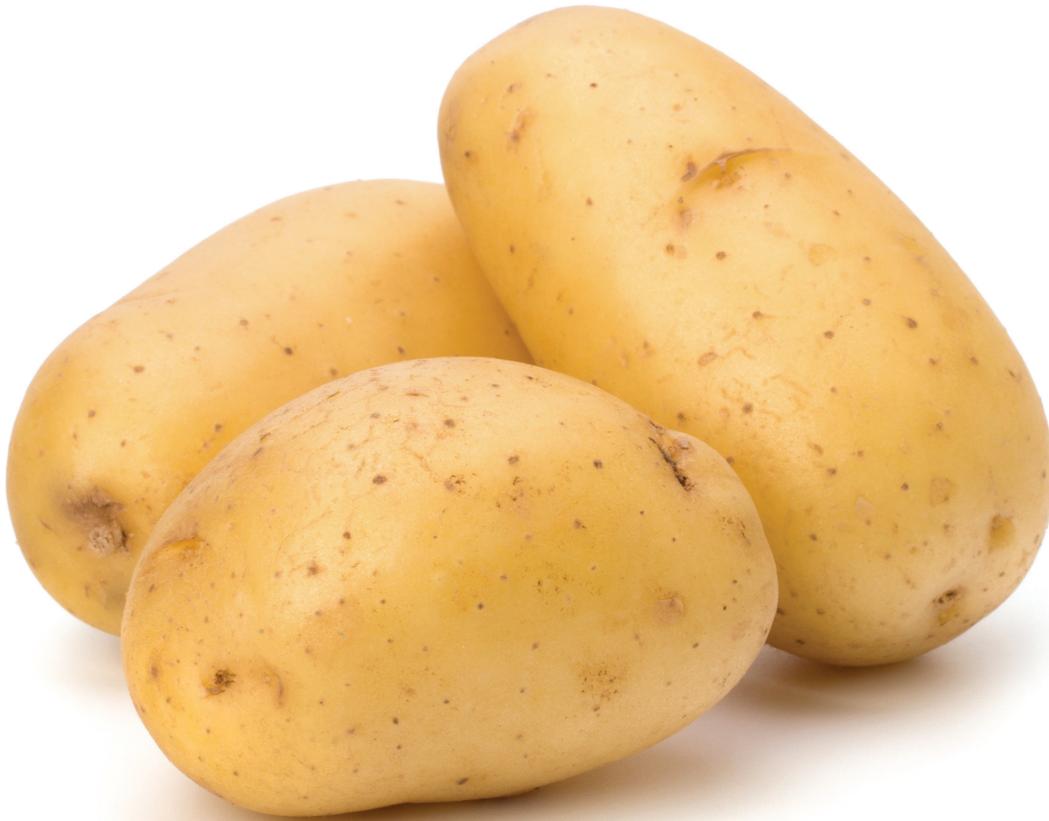
ANSWER: Fifteen minutes of sun per day is essential for maintaining a healthy level of vitamin D, which promotes the retention of calcium, mostly in your bones. Calcium is very important in the development of your bones and in strong teeth. Too much sun, however, may cause cancer and skin damage. To protect against damage from the sun's rays, it is important to avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest; to wear protective clothing; and to 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]

LESSON 4

MEDICINE MISUSE

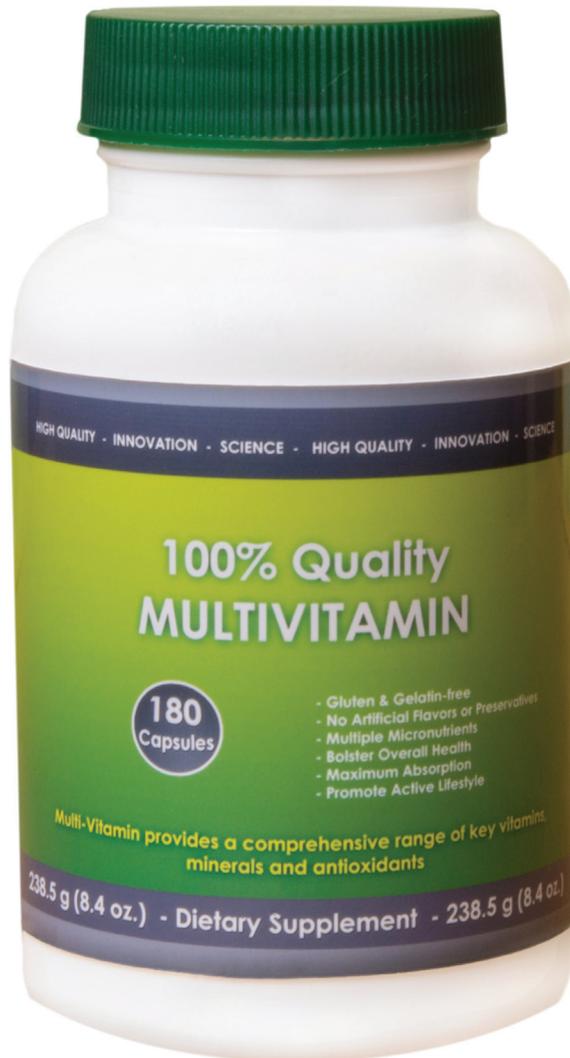


ANSWER: French fried, baked, or mashed potatoes are an excellent low-fat source of carbohydrates, which your body needs for energy. Dig a little deeper and you'll find that potatoes naturally contain solanine, a very toxic ingredient that can cause a number of health problems. Solanine thrives in well-lit 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 the discoloration and bad taste.

LESSON 4

MEDICINE MISUSE



ANSWER: Vitamins can be purchased from store shelves and are widely available. They're easy to access, but as they're considered over-the-counter medicines, 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.

LESSON 4

USE VS MISUSE



ANSWER Ibuprofen has been used for decades for pain relief and is available over the counter. When ibuprofen is used as directed, it reduces inflammation (swelling) and can also reduce fevers. However, large doses of ibuprofen can cause damage to the stomach or intestines.

NOW YOU KNOW Follow directions on the Drug Facts label and talk to a trusted adult before taking an anti-inflammatory medicine.

Student Name: _____

CULMINATING STUDENT ACTIVITY 1

WHAT'S THE SCENARIO?

Directions: Read the scenarios and answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper.

Monique

Monique's parents are heading out for the evening, so Lora, her regular sitter, comes over to watch her. But not long after her parents leave, Monique starts to feel really sick to her stomach. Lora remembers she has some medicine in her backpack that the doctor prescribed to help relieve her flu symptoms a few months ago. Lora gets it out and tells Monique it should be fine for her to take it since she's really not that much younger or smaller than Lora.

1. Should Monique take Lora's medicine? Why or why not?
2. Outline the steps that Lora should have taken in order to handle this situation responsibly.

Kyron

Kyron's family is heading out on a weeklong trip to visit his grandmother Jada, who lives hours away. Because they will be gone for several days, Kyron's mom makes sure to pack a bag with many of the medicines the family uses regularly. When they get to his Grandma Jada's house, however, Kyron notices that his mom sets the bag on a shelf in a lower-level kitchen cabinet. Kyron is concerned because he knows this isn't safe, especially because his younger cousin Maya, who is only three years old, is also visiting Grandma Jada that week.

1. Who should Kyron talk to about his concerns? Why?
2. Brainstorm some ways that Kyron and his parents could address the medicine storage situation at his grandmother's house. What are some of the things they should talk to her about?

Sophie

Sophie has talked to her parents about what she learned in *OTC Medicine Safety* and they've decided as a family to take steps to solve some of the problems with medicines in their household. Help Sophie's family come up with solutions to the following problems:

1. Sophie's mom has always used a kitchen spoon to measure medicine.
2. Sophie's dad goes to the drugstore to buy medicine to help Sophie's sore throat and cough. He remembers that Sophie also takes allergy medicine and wonders if it is okay to mix different medicines. Who can Sophie's dad talk with to get answers to his questions?

Jason

Jason is an adult who has been dealing with a headache for the past couple of hours, and is trying hard to meet a deadline at work. Obviously his ailment is making it difficult to do his work. He used the bottle of headache medicine in his bag before, and the medicine worked pretty well. This time, however, Jason's headache seems to be extra annoying. He's thinking about taking more than the dose he took before because his headache seems worse this time around. He's already taken cold medicine today for an ongoing bout with stuffiness, so maybe a couple of these headache pain reliever pills will do the trick.

1. Should Jason take more than the recommended dose of headache pain reliever medicine? Why or why not?
2. Why is it important for Jason to read the *Drug Facts* label on the headache medicine? Hint: Remember that he has also taken cold medicine today.

Follow-up: Create your own scenario or pair up with another student to produce a joint scenario.

Student Name: _____

CULMINATING STUDENT ACTIVITY 2

ROLE-PLAYING

Directions: Select one or more of these situations to act out with your group. Review the characters, situations, and tasks as you prepare to present to your classmates. Your teacher will quiz your classmates with the follow-up questions about each situation.

The Unwell Friend

CHARACTERS

- **Sarah:** A student who lives in the house where the scene is set
- **Emma:** A friend who doesn't live in the house and isn't feeling well
- **Mrs. Moore:** Parent who lives in the house
- **Mrs. Watson:** Parent of friend who doesn't feel well

SITUATION

- Your friend is visiting you and develops a bad headache, so she asks for some medicine she usually takes at home.

TASK(S)

- Act this scene out twice: once, showing the wrong or unsafe way to handle this situation, then showing the safe and responsible way to address the problem.
- Include discussion about whether the medicine she takes is prescription (Rx) or over-the-counter (OTC), and how to tell the difference.
- Decide how to handle the situation with the adults.

QUESTIONS

1. Did you think the way your classmates acted this scene out seemed believable? Why or why not?
2. Name one thing you remember about the differences/similarities between prescription and OTC medicines that your classmates didn't address in the skit.
3. Do you have any other suggestions for safe ways to deal with this situation?

The Right Dose

CHARACTERS

- A student who lives in the house where the scene is set
- Two or three friends who are visiting to study for a test
- An older sibling who lives in the house
- A parent

SITUATION

- You and your friends are studying in a room where medicine is kept.
- An older sibling comes in and begins rifling through the medicine drawer.
- The older sibling chooses a medicine without consulting an adult and doesn't choose the dosage device that comes with the medicine.

TASK(S)

- You and your friends must convince the older sibling he or she is being unsafe by explaining what you have learned about medicine safety and *Drug Facts*.
- You also should explain that when it comes to taking medicine, more doesn't necessarily mean better.
- The parent must be consulted about taking the medicine.

QUESTIONS

1. What else should the younger siblings inform their older sibling about?
2. Did the students in this skit address where the medicine was stored in the house? Was it stored in a smart place? Why or why not?
3. Do you have any other suggestions for safe and responsible ways to deal with this situation?

CULMINATING STUDENT ACTIVITY 2

ROLE-PLAYING

CONTINUED

The Drug Facts Detectives

CHARACTERS

- A student
- A parent of the student
- A pharmacist
- A shopper (or a pair of shoppers) who needs information about OTC medicine directions for a baby
- A shopper who needs information on the drug interactions of an OTC medicine

SITUATION

- A student and his or her parent are at the pharmacy looking for a medicine for the student's allergy symptoms.
- The student and the parent have some questions about the information on the *Drug Facts* label.
- Other shoppers learn from what the student and parent are doing and become more informed about the *Drug Facts* label.

TASK(S)

- The student and the parent must ask the pharmacist some questions about the *Drug Facts* label; in the skit, the student and the parent should mention that the student sometimes takes medicine that contains a pain reliever for headaches.

- The pharmacist should help the parent and student understand how to choose the right allergy medicine by comparing active ingredients on the *Drug Facts* label with the pain reliever medicine they have at home.
- Other shoppers should hear this and realize they can ask the pharmacist questions about OTC medications.
- The pharmacist should answer other shoppers' questions and help them learn where else they can get more information.

QUESTIONS

1. What else do you remember about the Active Ingredients section on the *Drug Facts* label that this skit didn't mention?
2. Are there any other sections of the *Drug Facts* label the pharmacist should have or could have mentioned when talking to customers? Which sections and why?
3. Did the shoppers and pharmacist remember all the places or sources to look for more information? If not, what did they leave out?

KNOW THE FACTS

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

Read the following passage and answer the questions.

Your friend Brian is sleeping over tonight, and you plan to watch movies at home with snacks. Brian's stomachache might put a kink in the plans, however. Ever since dinner he's been feeling a bit uncomfortable, so you decide to share some medicine your parents bought last year for your little sister Kim's stomach pain. It's an over-the-counter medicine (not a prescription), and you know that Brian is allergic to certain medicines and you should always talk to a trusted adult before using medicine. There is an expiration date on the bottle, and on the back panel there is a *Drug Facts* label, which lists information like uses (what symptoms the medicine treats), directions (the amount or dose of medicine to take, who should take it, how often it should be taken), active and inactive ingredients, and more. Your parents have gone to bed and you're thinking about handling this situation yourself.

Should you give the medicine to Brian without talking to your parents first? Why or why not?

Describe the difference(s) between OTC medicines and prescription medicines:

Why is it important to read the *Drug Facts* label when planning to take OTC medicines?

Should your parent give Kim's stomach pain reliever to Brian if he has the same symptoms as Kim? What part of the *Drug Facts* label will indicate that?

KNOW THE FACTS

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY FOR ADOLESCENTS

Tell your family about over-the-counter (OTC) medicine safety. Create a two- to three-minute public service announcement (PSA) about OTC medicine targeted at your family. Use any data or statistics from the infographic or the resources on the next page that you think might strengthen the message of your PSA. Think about younger siblings, grandparents, or someone in your home recovering from an operation or injury who needs to take medicine.

Use this outline to start planning the content for your PSA, and when you've organized your thoughts, draft your message on a separate sheet of paper. Remember: Your message should be informative and interesting!

PSA MESSAGE: USING AND STORING OTC MEDICINES SAFELY

Audience: Your family members *(What are their ages? How many people are in your family?)*

Scenario *(Where does this PSA take place?)*

Character Names *(Who's involved in this PSA?)*

Action *(What happens during your PSA?)*

Solution/Facts *(How does your PSA address usage and storage of OTC medicines?)*

For More Information *(Here is your opportunity to offer viewers a phone number or website for more information!)*

OTC MEDICINE SAFETY

ANSWER KEY

► STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

1. Both
2. Prescription
3. Prescription
4. Both
5. OTC
6. Both
7. Both

► STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

1. Answers might include: mentions of reasons that someone should not take the drug, such as an allergic reaction to the product or any of its ingredients; other products that should not be used while using this product; or other reasons why a person should not take the product. It's important that a person read this information before taking medicine because it can help avoid preventable side effects.
2. Yes. Side effects may include drowsiness and/or excitability, particularly for children.
3. Answers may include: A doctor should be consulted before use of this product if you have liver or kidney disease, and for the purposes of administering to children under 6 years of age. A doctor should be consulted if allergic reaction or overdose occurs.
4. The "Directions" section.
5. 1-800-222-1222

► STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

1. At 8 a.m. the next day. After that, no more doses should be given until after 8 p.m.
2. a. 2.5 mL
b. 2.5 mL
3. Utilizing anything other than the dosing device that is packaged with the medicine can result in an inaccurate dose.

4. A *Drug Facts* label might suggest that people contact a doctor before use for a variety of reasons. These reasons may include factors such as age, health conditions, or other medicines they are taking that may require special instruction or may make the medicine inappropriate for certain people.
5. Answers could include a discussion of the information provided on the *Drug Facts* label; use of proper dosing devices; the consequences of not using proper dosing devices; communicating the importance of understanding dosing information.

► STUDENT WORKSHEET 4

[Freeform writing. Answers will vary.]

► STUDENT WORKSHEET 5

Any response that identifies medication stored in a location that is not up, away, and out of sight would be acceptable. The medication storage errors shown in the picture are as follows:

1. Bottle of cough medicine on the counter and a teaspoon with a trace of medicine visible on spoon
2. Medicine left out on the nightstand with dosage cup
3. Allergy medicine on the table next to vase
4. Toiletry bag hanging low from doorknob inside closet
5. Medicine bottles visible and accessible inside cabinet below kitchen sink
6. Open purse with multivitamin bottle sticking out of the top

(Continued)

OTC MEDICINE SAFETY

ANSWER KEY

(Continued)

PRE-ASSESSMENT QUIZ, POST-ASSESSMENT QUIZ

Q1. PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE	
Q2. OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) MEDICINE	
Q3.	
If you use a household or kitchen spoon to measure liquid medicines, you can be sure you will get the right dose.	FALSE
You can't be harmed by over-the-counter medicines. After all, you can buy them without a doctor's prescription.	FALSE
It's okay to take two medicines with the same active ingredient at the same time.	FALSE
It's okay to use someone else's prescription medicine if you have the same symptoms he or she had when he or she got it.	FALSE
It's okay to take your leftover prescription medicine later if you get sick again.	FALSE
It's okay to take more medicine than what is directed on the label if you are very sick.	FALSE
In a medicine, an active ingredient is what relieves a person's symptoms.	TRUE
The <i>Drug Facts</i> label tells you what symptoms the medicine treats.	TRUE
The <i>Drug Facts</i> label gives you the dosage information (how much medicine to take).	TRUE
Q4.	
A pharmacist can answer questions about over-the-counter medicines.	TRUE
All medicines have an expiration date.	TRUE
Children should not use prescription medicine without the permission of their parent or a trusted adult.	TRUE
Medicine should be kept in a place where children can't reach it.	TRUE
If you and your friend are the same age it will be safe for you to take the same dose of an over-the-counter medicine.	FALSE
Prescription medicine cannot be bought without a doctor's permission.	TRUE

(Continued)

OTC MEDICINE SAFETY

ANSWER KEY

(Continued)

PRE-ASSESSMENT QUIZ, POST-ASSESSMENT QUIZ

Q5.	
Children over 12 can take over-the-counter medicine without a parent's permission if they carefully read the label.	FALSE
Medicine should be stored in the container it came in.	TRUE
One gulp from a bottle of liquid medicine is exactly one tablespoon of medicine.	FALSE
Over-the-counter medicines can be dangerous when misused.	TRUE
Prescription medicine can be found on the shelves in some stores.	FALSE
Prescription medicine is meant to be used by one person.	TRUE
Q6.	
The local poison center is a good place to call if someone has taken too much medicine.	TRUE
Medicine should be kept on the kitchen counter so you remember to take it.	FALSE
Taking more medicine than directed will help you feel better faster.	FALSE
Taking more than one medicine with the same active ingredient will help you feel better faster.	FALSE
If you have questions about an over-the-counter medicine you have not taken before, you should ask a friend who has taken it before.	FALSE
You can call the poison center even if it isn't an emergency.	TRUE



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY FOR FAMILIES

Over 20,000 kids per year need medical help due to medicine mistakes or misuse.*

Download more **FREE** resources:
ymiclassroom.com/otcmedsafety-families



Support for the development of this education material was provided by

Johnson & Johnson CONSUMER INC.

*AAPCC National Poison Data System query parameters: 2011–2016 annual average, ages 0-19, all unintentional and intentional misuse reasons for pharmaceutical exposure, cases en route to a healthcare facility or treatment recommended by a specialist in poison information, all outcomes.

All program materials
are FREE.



Keeping Your Children Medicine-Safe

As children get older, they often start to take on more responsibility—at home, at school, and even with their health. That is why it's so important for families to help children learn how to make safe choices.

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines can be purchased from a store without a doctor's prescription, but they still need to be treated with the same amount of care! It is important to read and follow the *Drug Facts* label every time.

Medicine Action Plan

Create a medicine action plan to help keep everyone safe and healthy! Have your child check off each item as you complete it together.

- Which adults should your child talk to if he or she is sick and may need medicine? Provide options if a primary caregiver is unavailable.
- Where will medicines be stored in your home? Remember that they should be up, away, and out of sight!
- How will you make sure that each medicine and the dosing device it comes with are kept together?
- How will your family make sure that the child safety caps are locked on all medicines?
- How will you make sure that visitors keep all of their medicines out of children's reach and sight?
- Program the Poison Help number into your phone: **1-800-222-1222**. Bookmark the Interactive Poison Help Website: **poisonhelp.org**.

Get to Know Your Medicine Label

Work as a family to learn more about the children's OTC medicines that you have in your home. Answer these questions together:

- ▶ What are the active ingredients?
- ▶ Are any side effects listed (under "Warnings")?
- ▶ Where is the poison control number on this label?
- ▶ What is the correct dose for your child to take if he or she is sick?
- ▶ How frequently should your child take the medicine if he or she is sick?
- ▶ Is the dose or frequency different for a younger sibling?
- ▶ What type of medicine dosing device came with the medicine? (Make sure it is stored with the medicine!)



Get free, confidential answers to your medicine questions by calling



Medicine Storage and Disposal, Safe Use, and Misuse

Using the correct dose of medicine is a science—too little won't be effective, and too much could be harmful. It's also important to make sure that medicines are stored up, away, and out of sight, as well as disposed of properly (see bit.ly/fda-disposal).

Play the **Hidden Home Hazards** game as a family to learn about safe storage.

Medicine Safety Hunt

How safe is each room in your home? Work together as a family to make sure that all types of health-related items are up and away in a safe location. Look for all of the following:

- ▶ Liquid medicines
- ▶ Pills
- ▶ Medicated creams
- ▶ Cough drops
- ▶ Eye drops
- ▶ Vitamins
- ▶ Supplements
- ▶ Prescription medicines
- ▶ Other healthcare products or potentially dangerous products, such as detergent pods

1. Are all medicines up, away, and out of sight?
2. Is the medicine dosing device stored with the medicine?
3. When disposing of a medicine, do you follow the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's guidelines?
4. Is any medicine past its expiration date?

What Should You Do?

As a family, read each of the following scenarios about OTC medicines. Is this situation safe? Is this misuse? How should the characters handle the situation?

- ▶ Nikita has a headache. Last time she had a headache, her dad gave her some ibuprofen. He isn't home from work yet, so Nikita goes to the medicine cabinet and takes a couple of the pills without talking to her dad.
- ▶ Ruben is taking a dose of cough syrup under his mom's supervision. He forgot the dosing device in the cabinet, so he

grabs a spoon from the kitchen drawer to measure his dose of medicine.

- ▶ Every day, Angelica takes a once-a-day allergy medicine. Her mom always reminds her at breakfast. Today, though, it doesn't seem to be working. At lunchtime, Angelica takes another dose of the medicine so she will feel better faster.



Dosage Cup

the Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, or visit poisonhelp.org.



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. Keep prescription medicines locked away.
- Ensure that the child safety caps are locked on all medicines.
- Remind visitors to keep luggage, purses, or anything else that might have medicines in it out of children's reach and sight.
- Medicines should only be taken with the supervision of an adult or trusted guardian. Communicate with other caregivers to prevent double-dosing errors.
- 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**.
- Bookmark the Interactive Poison Help Website: **poisonhelp.org**.

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: _____

Phone Number: _____

Pharmacy Name: _____

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.

Interactive Poison Help Website: **poisonhelp.org**

All of these resources and more are available for FREE:
ymiclassroom.com/otcmedsafety-families