



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

LESSON 2: Obtaining Information from a Drug Facts Label

In this second lesson of the OTC Medicine Safety program, students will learn how to identify and comprehend the information on a drug facts label.

Grades 7–8

Duration: 40 minutes

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- 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

- Using the Drug Facts Label printable
- Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety Classroom Poster printable
- Find a Drug Facts Label Scavenger Hunt printable
- Paper and pen or pencil
- Computer with Internet access and projector
- Medicine Safety for Families Newsletter printable
- Assortment of empty medicine containers that correspond to the Find a Drug Facts Label Scavenger Hunt printable (e.g. empty fever-reducer bottles, empty bottles of pain reliever, empty bottles of antacids, empty bags of cough drops, empty bottles of antihistamine)
- Optional: [FDA's Medicines in My Home video](#)

During Instruction

SET UP

1. Emphasize to students that they should never take medicine without the supervision of a parent or trusted adult.
2. Make copies of the printables for each student in your class.
3. Set up a projector to show the [FDA's Medicines in My Home video](#).

LESSON DIRECTIONS

Step 1: Ask students to describe a time when they did not follow directions and faced unpleasant consequences. Discuss responses and emphasize 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.

Step 2: Explain that at times, you may have to look for directions, and you should always ask your teacher, parent, or a trusted adult to clarify them so you fully understand what to do.

Step 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.

Step 4: Organize the class into groups of three or four students and give one medicine container to each group. Distribute Understanding the Drug Facts Label printable.

Step 5: Show the [FDA's Medicines in My Home video](#) if possible. 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.

Step 6: Ask students:

- Which medicine does your group have?
- Where are the directions on your group's medicine bottle and what do they tell you?
- Where are the warnings?
- Where is the ingredients section?

Step 7: Explain that directions and drug information for OTC medicines are found on Drug Facts labels, which appear on OTC medicines per FDA regulation.

Step 8: Walk students through each section of the labels on the Understanding the Drug Facts Label printable. 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 Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety Classroom Poster printable to support the discussion).

Step 9: Have students refer to their medicine containers to reinforce the structure and language of the Drug Facts label.

Step 10: Explain that students are now going to apply their Drug Facts label knowledge to a wide variety of medicines. Provide an assortment of empty medicine bottles, bags, or boxes, and the Find a Drug Facts Label Scavenger Hunt printable. Allow students to work with their groups to complete the activity.

Step 11: When students have finished, ask students to share some of the warnings and side effects they discovered on labels during the scavenger hunt. (Answers may include that medicines can be harmful if you take too much and can interact with other medicines to cause harm. Ingredients of medicines may cause allergic reactions or cause side effects like drowsiness or nausea.) 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.

Step 12: Ask how many students noticed the Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, listed on the Drug Facts label. Explain that 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.

Extension

Provide students with the following prompt: Research the regulation that required Drug Facts labels to appear on OTC medicines. Write a paragraph to describe the regulation and identify some of the problems that it helped to address.

Home Connections

If you haven't already, send home the Medicine Safety for Families Newsletter printable so students may continue the discussion at home.

Using the 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 on the medicine box pictured here in order to answer the questions below. Write your answers on the back of this sheet.

Think It Through

1. Are there any side effects associated with the use of this medicine?
2. According to this label, what are some reasons that someone might have to contact a doctor before or after giving this medicine?
3. What section of the label would you refer to in order to determine the correct dose?
4. Why do you think the sections of the Drug Facts label appear in this order?
5. What text features are used to make the label easy to understand?

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 a Poison Control Center right away (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 800-555-5555.

This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

Did you know? Poison control centers are staffed with experts, including doctors, nurses, and pharmacists who can help answer questions about medicines or provide help over the phone if you come into contact with a poison. Calls are free and private.

Use the Drug Facts label on OTC medicines to find each of the following. Write the name of the medicine in the appropriate box.

A Drug Facts label that includes a warning about allergic reactions

A medicine that should be taken every 4 to 6 hours

A Drug Facts label that instructs you to ask a doctor before use

A medicine used to relieve minor aches and pains

A medicine that you may not want to take if you need to be alert for a soccer game

A Drug Facts label that has different instructions for adults and children under 12

A medicine that should not be stored near a shower

A Drug Facts label that lists more than one active ingredient

A medicine that should be taken every 8 hours

A Drug Facts label that includes a sore throat side effect warning

A medicine that should be kept out of the reach of children

A medicine used to relieve heartburn

A Drug Facts label that provides the dosage in milligrams

A Drug Facts label that includes the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222)

Two medicines that should not be taken at the same time

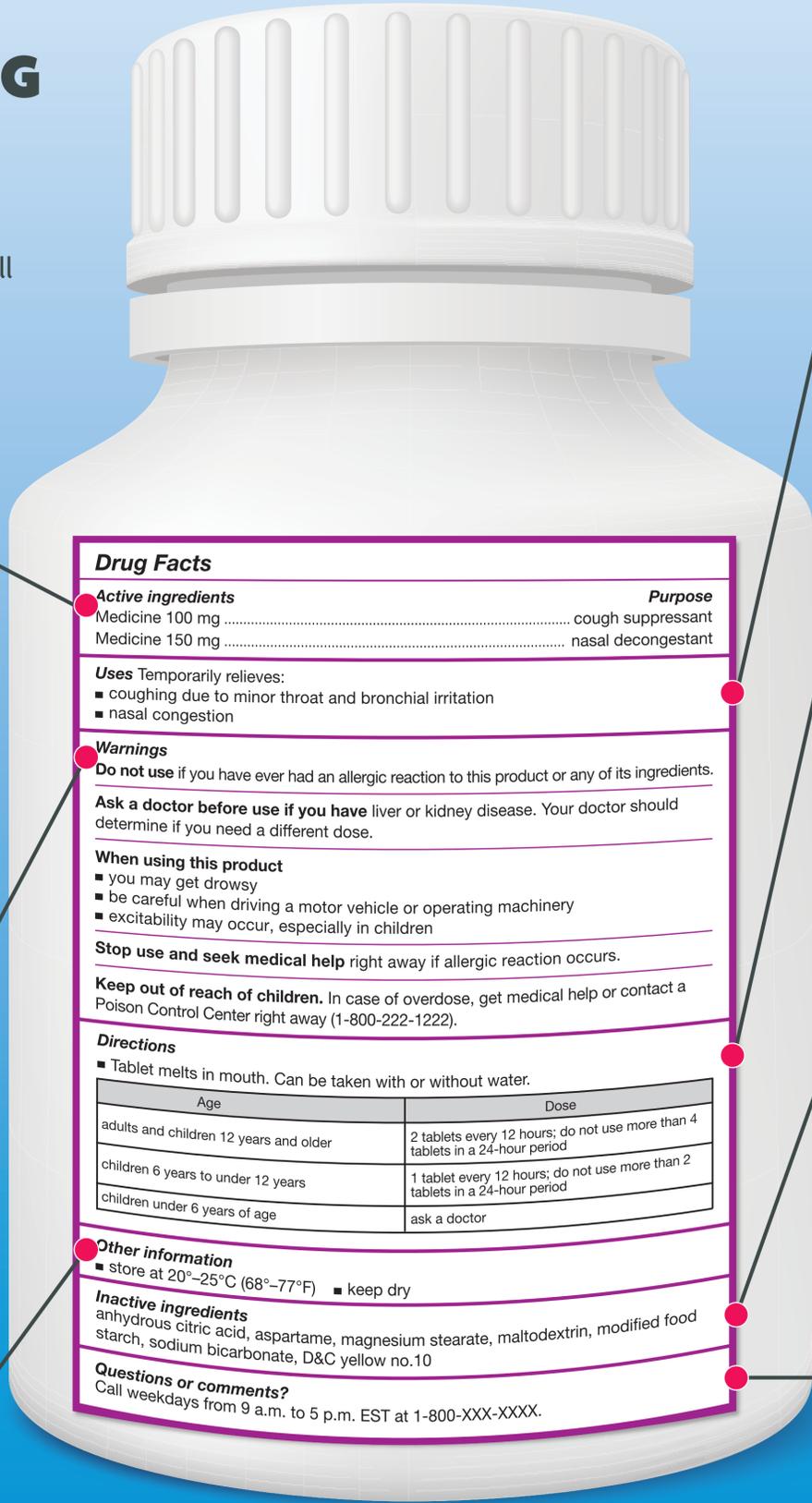
A medicine that you should not take if you are allergic to corn



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

UNDERSTANDING THE LABEL

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



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?

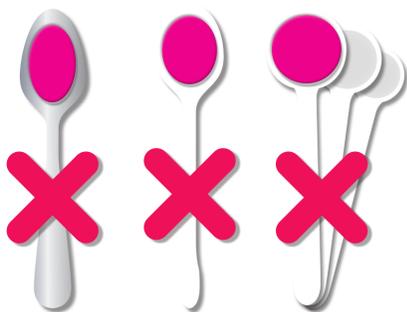
Call the company if you have questions about a specific medicine.



This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

MEASURE IT CORRECTLY

To get an exact measurement, it is important to only use the dosing device that is provided with the medicine. The *Drug Facts* label tells you how much medicine you should take based on your weight and/or age. Take only one medicine with the same kind of active ingredient at a time.



FACT Household spoons come in various shapes and sizes, which means they hold different amounts of liquid.

ASK FOR HELP

Always talk with a parent or trusted adult to learn more about the responsible use of all medicines. Other resources include doctors, nurses, and pharmacists as well as your local poison control center.

In 2018, America's poison control centers managed

1.23 MILLION

medicine exposure cases involving children, tweens, and teens. About half of these exposures involved various medicines.¹

Poison Help
1-800-222-1222

DID YOU KNOW?

Poison control centers are staffed with experts including doctors, nurses, and pharmacists who can help answer questions about medicines or can provide help over the phone if you come in contact with a poison. Calls are free and private.

¹Source: American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System. Data covers ages 0-19.



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



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*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