

UNDERSTANDING THE DANGERS OF MEDICINE MISUSE

Students will learn about the responsible medicine use and the harm that could result from misuses of medicine.

TIME: 40 minutes

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

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Copies of the following reproducible activity sheets for each student in the class:
 - ◊ **Activity 6: OTC Medicine Safety Awareness in Your Community**
- **Activity 7: Use vs. Misuse Classroom Activity** (4 pages/slides)
- **OTC Medicine Safety Answer Key**
- **OTC Medicine Safety for Families** (letter in English and Spanish)
- Computer and whiteboard/digital display screen
- Optional: Computer with internet access for student use
- Optional: **OTC Medicine Safety Post-Assessment Quiz**

Note: All Unit resources and digital assets featured on page 2 can be accessed at www.ymiclassroom.com/lesson-plans/otcmedsafety-teachers_7-8.

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON PART 1

1. Begin this lesson by prompting an open class discussion. Ask students:
 - *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.
2. Use the **Use vs. Misuse Classroom Activity** to explore how students’ preconceived ideas can sometimes cloud less obvious facts about a topic. Show only the pictures on each page — sun, potatoes, vitamins, ibuprofen. Do not reveal the “Answer” or “Now You Know” sections. After showing the four pictures, ask students:
 - *How are these four items related?*
 - *How do people benefit from these items?*

- *Is it possible that these items may be harmful?*

Explain that all four items are safe when used or stored properly, but they can all have detrimental health effects when used or stored improperly.

3. Go back through pictures and uncover the answers beneath each one.

Page 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 30 or higher, according to the American Skin Association.

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

Page 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.

Page 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.

Page 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.

(Continued on the next page.)



UNDERSTANDING THE DANGERS OF MEDICINE MISUSE (CONTINUED)

PART 2

1. Discuss how the four items on the **Use vs. Misuse**

Classroom Activity pages 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, important information that you might ordinarily overlook. Ask students:

- *Can you think of other items you come into contact with regularly that are safe when used properly, but dangerous when misused?*

Answers may include appliances, cars, medicines, cleaning supplies, etc.

2. Explain that students will look more closely at the effects of medicine misuse. 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.

3. Have students work in pairs to brainstorm possible answers to the questions below. If students have access to technology, have them quickly research their answers.

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 different medicines with the same 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?*

4. Once students have completed the questions, ask them to share their answers with the class. During the discussion, emphasize that all the scenarios are dangerous because there are very real and potentially dangerous consequences when someone misuses OTC medicines. For example, misuse can lead to nausea, diarrhea, irregular heartbeat, seizures, and even the potential for addiction. The *Drug Facts* label provides instructions for using the medicine safely.

5. Ask students:

- *Based on the information you've learned while studying OTC Medicine Safety, who do you believe needs to be informed about the dangers of misusing OTC medicines?*

Answers may include: Parents and guardians so they can keep children safe; younger children so they can avoid

dangerous situations; local officials so they can develop programs and policies for safe medicine use and disposal.

6. Distribute the **OTC Medicine Awareness in Your Community** activity sheet and read the directions together. Discuss the two different audiences students can reach: local officials or younger students. Remind students that they need to keep their audience in mind when writing. Discuss these questions as a class:

- *What information would be most persuasive for local officials? What is the best way to communicate this information and your suggestions?*
- *What information would be most persuasive for younger students? What is the best way to get their attention and help them remember this information?*

7. Invite students to conduct online research for their writing. Then have them complete the assignment. Schedule time for students to share their work with the class.

8. Explain to students that this activity sheet can be used to launch a 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. Working together in this way, they would show collective support for making their communities and schools safer places for children and their families, and could help disseminate information 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.

9. **Optional:** Assess what students have learned about OTC medicine safety by having them complete the **OTC Medicine Safety Post-Assessment Quiz**. Compare the completed quizzes to students' pre-assessments to measure the growth of their knowledge.

10. **Family/Home Connection:** If you have not already done so, distribute the **OTC Medicine Safety for Families** letter for students to take home, or include the PDF in email correspondence to parents and caregivers. Encourage students to share what they have learned about the *Drug Facts* label and why it is important. Suggest that students post the Poison Help Line phone number in a visible place in their home and get family members to save the number in their mobile phones. **Reinforce the importance of always communicating with a trusted adult before taking any medicine, and only taking medicine with the approval and supervision of a parent or trusted adult.**

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Now that students have learned about the misuse of OTC medicines, the importance of understanding the *Drug Facts* label, and the safety precautions for proper use and storage, encourage them to apply what they've learned in a role-playing activity.





Unit 1, Activity 1:

COMPARE OVER-THE-COUNTER VS. PRESCRIPTION (RX) MEDICINES

Part 1

1. Both
2. Prescription (Rx) medicine
3. Prescription (Rx) medicine
4. Both
5. Over-the-Counter (OTC) medicine
6. Both
7. Both

Part 2

1. Prescription (Rx)
2. Don't know (not enough information)
3. OTC

Unit 2, Activity 2:

USING THE DRUG FACTS LABEL

1. Side effects may include drowsiness and/or excitability, especially in children
2. Answers may include: A doctor should be consulted before taking this medicine if you have liver or kidney disease, and before giving the medicine to children under 6 years of age. A doctor should also be consulted if an allergic reaction or overdose occurs.
3. The **Directions** section.
4. Answers could include that the *Drug Facts* label appears in a standardized format for consumers' ease of use and understanding in what a medicine does and how to use it safely. The label allows consumers to know where to look for information to make informed choices relevant to their health situation. Most serious warnings are presented first as it is helpful to convey these important safety messages to consumers.¹
5. Answers might include: Uniform formatting on the label: Use of bolded and italicized headers and bulleted information within sections increases readability; use of bolded font emphasizes important safety information, such as "Keep out of reach of children," "Stop use and seek medical help right away."
6. 1-800-222-1222

Unit 2, Activity 3:

FIND A DRUG FACTS LABEL SCAVENGER HUNT

Answers will vary.

Unit 3, Activity 4:

ACCURATE MEDICINE DOSING

1. Olivia is 13 years old. The proper dose for adults and children 12 years of age and older is 5 ml two times per day. The dose may be repeated every 12 hours while symptoms last. Olivia's reasoning might be that since it is a new day that she can take another dose of medicine. This is an error as no more doses should be given until 9 am. The label directs that it is not safe to take more than 10 ml in 24 hours.
2. Miguel is 11 years old. The proper dose for children under 12 years of age is 2.5 ml two times per day. Taking 5 ml once a day can result in an overdose and potential side effects.
3. Using anything other than the dosing device that is packaged with the medicine can result in an inaccurate dose.

Unit 3, Activity 5:

SAFE MEDICINE STORAGE

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. Open purse with pain relief bottle sticking out of the top
2. Medicine left out on the nightstand with dosage cup
3. Toiletry bag hanging low from doorknob inside closet with vitamin bottle showing
4. Medicine bottles visible and accessible inside cabinet below kitchen sink
5. Bottle of cough medicine on the counter and a teaspoon with a trace of medicine visible on spoon (should be using the dosing device and stored up and away)
6. Allergy medicine on the table next to vase

Unit 4, Activity 6:

OTC MEDICINE SAFETY AWARENESS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Answers will vary.

Unit 5, Activity 8:

OTC MEDICINE SAFETY ARTICLE

Answers will vary.

1. <https://www.fda.gov/media/150098/download>;

2. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/information-consumers-and-patients-drugs/otc-drug-facts-label>

Pre/Post-Assessment Quiz

Types of Medicine What type of medicine is best described by each statement below? Check only one.

Q1. This is medicine a doctor orders for you, and is available only from a pharmacist.

Prescription medicine

✓

Q2. This is medicine bought in a drugstore, pharmacy, or grocery store without having to get a doctor's permission.

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine

✓

Medicine Safety

Q3. Are the following statements True or False? Check one answer for each row.

TRUE

FALSE

If you use a household or kitchen spoon to measure liquid medicines, you can be sure you will get the right dose.

✓

You can't be harmed by over-the-counter medicines.

✓

It's okay to take two medicines with the same active ingredient at the same time.

✓

It's okay to use someone else's prescription medicine if you have the same symptoms they had when they got it.

✓

It's okay to take your leftover prescription medicine later if you get sick again.

✓

It's okay to take more medicine than what is directed on the label if you are very sick.

✓

In a medicine, an active ingredient is what relieves a person's symptoms.

✓

The *Drug Facts* label tells you what symptoms the medicine treats.

✓

The *Drug Facts* label gives you the dosage information (how much medicine to take).

✓

Q4. Are the following statements True or False? Check one answer for each row.

TRUE

FALSE

A pharmacist can answer questions about over-the-counter medicines.

✓

All medicines have an expiration date.

✓

Children should not use prescription medicine without the permission of their parent or a trusted adult.

✓

Medicine should be kept in a place where children can't reach it.

✓

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.

✓

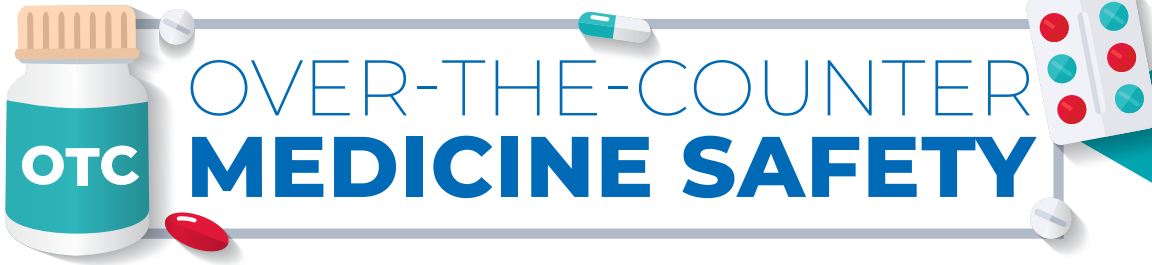
Prescription medicine cannot be bought without a doctor's permission.

✓

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Pre/Post-Assessment Quiz (continued)

Medicine Safety		
Q5. Are the following statements True or False? Check one answer for each row.	TRUE	FALSE
Children over 12 can take over-the-counter medicine without a parent's permission if they carefully read the label.		✓
Medicine should be stored in the container it came in.	✓	
One gulp from a bottle of liquid medicine is exactly one tablespoon of medicine.		✓
Over-the-counter medicines can be dangerous when misused.	✓	
Prescription medicine can be found on the shelves in some stores.		✓
Prescription medicine is meant to be used by one person.	✓	
Q6. Are the following statements True or False? Check one answer for each row.	TRUE	FALSE
The Poison Help Line is a good place to call if someone has taken too much medicine.	✓	
Medicine should be kept on the kitchen counter so you remember to take it.		✓
Taking more medicine than directed will help you feel better faster.		✓
Taking more than one medicine with the same active ingredient will help you feel better faster.		✓
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.		✓
You can call the Poison Help Line even if it isn't an emergency.	✓	



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

GRADES 7-8
UNIT 4, ACTIVITY 6

SKILLS:

Persuasive writing,
analytical thinking,
researching a topic

OTC Medicine Safety

Awareness in Your Community

Directions: Think about the discussions you've been having in class about over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and what can happen when the directions on the *Drug Facts* label are not followed. Choose one of the following options:

1. Write a persuasive letter to local officials about what you've learned. Introduce the concept of OTC medicine safety at the start of the letter, then cite evidence from this program and include your opinion as to why you think it's important for the community to learn about OTC medicines and the dangers of misuse. Consider submitting your letter or your class's collection of letters to local officials and community leaders.
2. Create a resource about OTC medicine safety for younger students. Choose an appropriate format to reach this audience. Remember to include a combination of text and visuals and choose key messages that specifically target your intended audience. Remember to include a combination of text and visuals and choose key messages that specifically target your intended audience.



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



GRADES 7-8
UNIT 4, ACTIVITY 7

SKILLS:
Critical thinking

Use vs. 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 for bone development and strong teeth. Too much sun, however, may cause skin damage and skin cancer. 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; wear protective clothing; and use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, according to the American Skin Association.



Now you know...

Use a good sunscreen when outdoors for more than 15 minutes and avoid prolonged sun exposure.





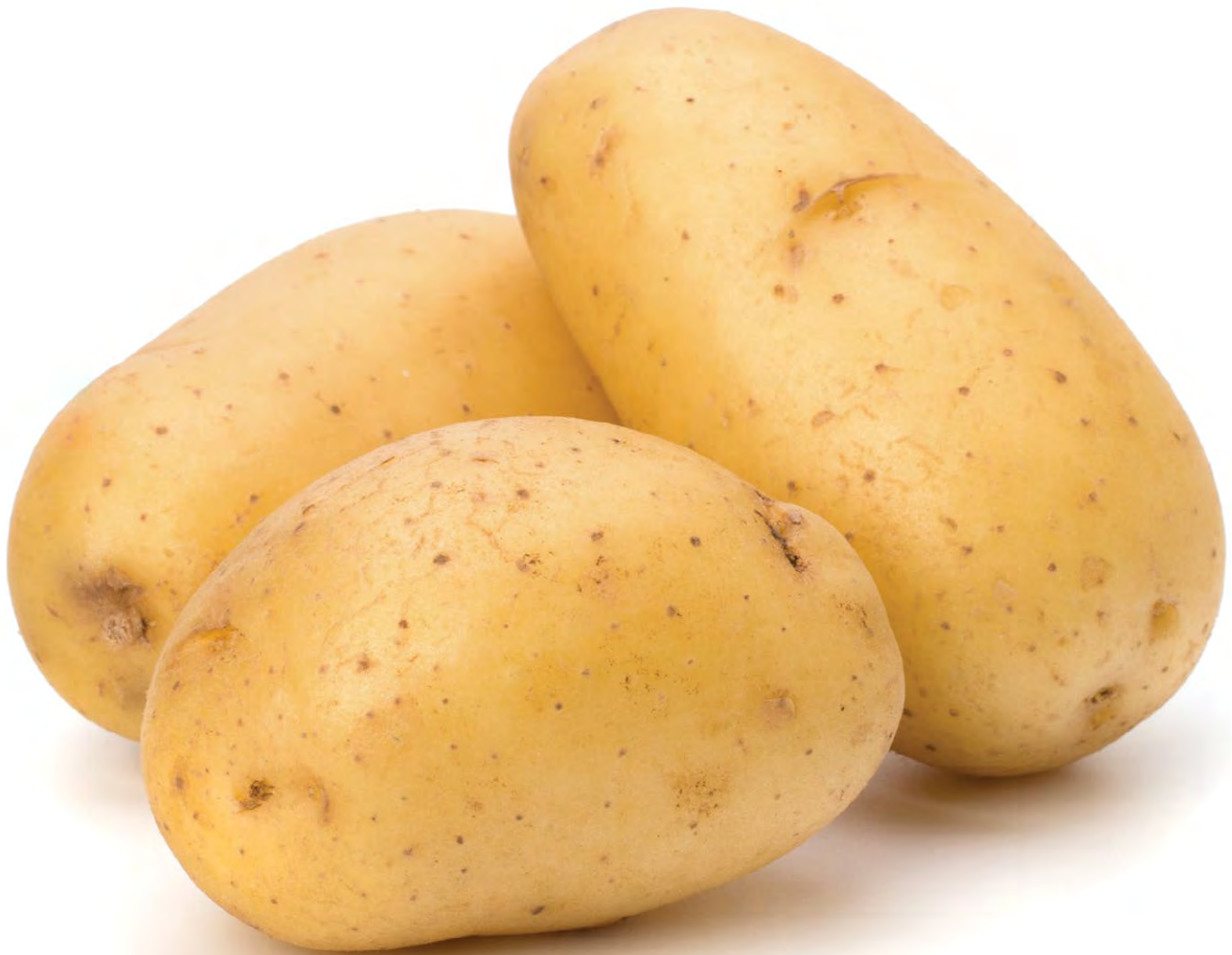
OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



GRADES 7-8
UNIT 4, ACTIVITY 7

SKILLS:
Critical thinking

Use vs. Misuse



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 the discoloration and bad taste.



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



GRADES 7-8
UNIT 4, ACTIVITY 7

SKILLS:
Critical thinking

Use vs. Misuse



ANSWER

Like all over-the-counter medicines, vitamins should not be taken without the approval and supervision 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 with a trusted adult before taking vitamins.



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



GRADES 7-8
UNIT 4, ACTIVITY 7

SKILLS:
Critical thinking

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.



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



GRADES 5-8
POST-ASSESSMENT

Post-Assessment

Q1. This is medicine a doctor orders for you, and is available only from a pharmacist.	
Prescription medicine	
Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine	
Not sure	

Q2. This is medicine bought in a drugstore, pharmacy, or grocery store without having to get a doctor's permission.	
Prescription medicine	
Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine	
Not sure	

Medicine Safety

Q3. Are the following statements True or False? Check one answer for each row.	TRUE	FALSE	NOT SURE
If you use a household or kitchen spoon to measure liquid medicines, you can be sure you will get the right dose.			
You can't be harmed by over-the-counter medicines.			
It's okay to take two medicines with the same active ingredient at the same time.			
It's okay to use someone else's prescription medicine if you have the same symptoms they had when they got it.			
It's okay to take your leftover prescription medicine later if you get sick again.			
It's okay to take more medicine than what is directed on the label if you are very sick.			
In a medicine, an active ingredient is what relieves a person's symptoms.			
The <i>Drug Facts</i> label tells you what symptoms the medicine treats.			
The <i>Drug Facts</i> label gives you the dosage information (how much medicine to take).			

Q4. Are the following statements True or False? Check one answer for each row.	TRUE	FALSE	NOT SURE
A pharmacist can answer questions about over-the-counter medicines.			
All medicines have an expiration date.			
Children should not use prescription medicine without the permission of their parent or a trusted adult.			
Medicine should be kept in a place where children can't reach it.			
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.			
Prescription medicine cannot be bought without a doctor's permission.			

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OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



GRADES 5-8
POST-ASSESSMENT

Post-Assessment (continued)

Medicine Safety

Q5. Are the following statements True or False? Check one answer for each row.	TRUE	FALSE	NOT SURE
Children over 12 can take over-the-counter medicine without a parent's permission if they carefully read the label.			
Medicine should be stored in the container it came in.			
One gulp from a bottle of liquid medicine is exactly one tablespoon of medicine.			
Over-the-counter medicines can be dangerous when misused.			
Prescription medicine can be found on the shelves in some stores.			
Prescription medicine is meant to be used by one person.			

Q6. Are the following statements True or False? Check one answer for each row.	TRUE	FALSE	NOT SURE
The Poison Help Line is a good place to call if someone has taken too much medicine.			
Medicine should be kept on the kitchen counter so you remember to take it.			
Taking more medicine than directed will help you feel better faster.			
Taking more than one medicine with the same active ingredient will help you feel better faster.			
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.			
You can call the Poison Help Line even if it isn't an emergency.			



The *Drug Facts* label helps you understand how medicines can help you and how to take them safely.

Active Ingredients

Lists the ingredients in the medicine that make it work.

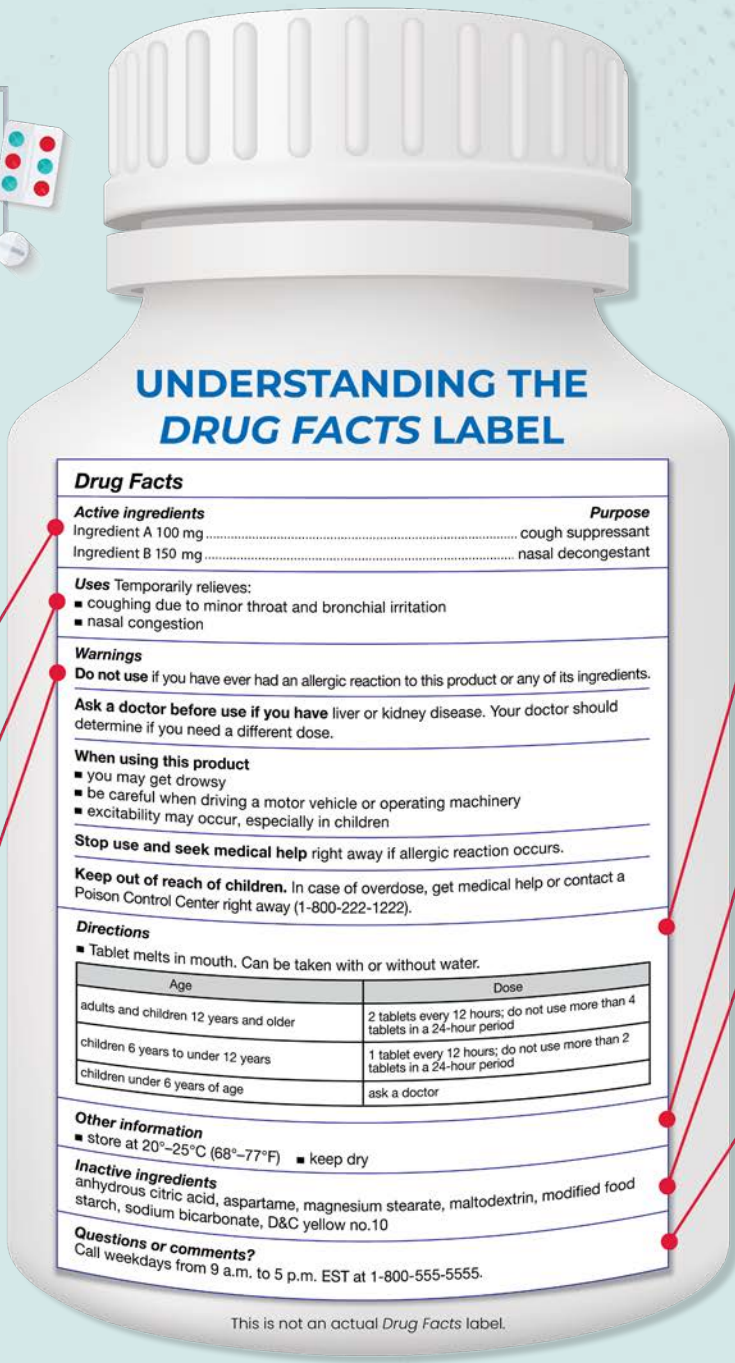
Uses

Describes the symptoms that the medicine treats.

Warnings

Provides important safety information, including side effects, questions you should ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and medicines to avoid using at the same time.

UNDERSTANDING THE DRUG FACTS LABEL



Drug Facts

Active ingredients

Ingredient A 100 mgcough suppressant	Purpose
Ingredient B 150 mgnasal 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 (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 1-800-555-5555.

This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

Check out the new **OTC Medicine Safety** videos and trivia game at ymiclassroom.com/otcmedsafety-multimedia.

Directions

Tells the amount or “dose” of medicine to take, how often to take it, and how much you can take in one day.

Other Information

Tells how to store the medicine.

Inactive Ingredients

Lists ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms, like preservatives and flavorings.

Questions or Comments?

Tells how to call the manufacturer if you have questions about the medicine.

MEASURE IT CORRECTLY

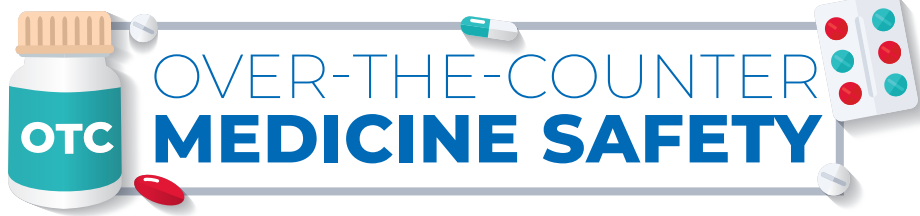
To get an exact measurement, it is important to only use the dosing device that is provided with the medicine. The *Drug Facts* label tells you how much medicine you should take based on your weight and/or age. Never take medicines with the same active ingredient at the same time.

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



SAFETY TIPS

- Only take medicine with adult supervision and approval.
- **Always** read the entire *Drug Facts* label before using an OTC medicine.
- Call the **Poison Control Center** number (also called Poison Help Line) at **1-800-222-1222** if you have **any** medicine questions or concerns.



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

REPRODUCIBLE LETTER
FOR FAMILIES

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Did you know that more than 85,000 children, ages 19 and under, require medical attention each year due to medicine mistakes or misuse?!

As kids get older, they 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 kids learn how to make safe choices before they take on a more active role in their self-care, including medicine use.

Since over-the-counter (OTC) medicines can be bought from a store without a doctor’s prescription, young people often falsely assume that they don’t need to be careful with them. However, OTC medicines can cause harm if they are not used correctly. To prevent medicine mistakes or misuse, make sure all members of your household know to read and follow the Drug Facts label.

Your child has already started to learn about the importance of medicine safety at school. Now is the perfect time to build on that knowledge to make sure everyone in your home feels ready to handle medicines responsibly. When families work together to create a medicine action plan, they help to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Use the checklist below to ensure that you keep your family “OTC Ready.”



Brought to you by



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Developed with support of the National Association of School Nurses.

Medicine Safety Practices

- Make sure all OTC medicines are properly labeled and stored in their original packaging.
- Never mix medicines – keep them in separate labeled containers.
- Teach your children that they should never take any medicine without adult approval and supervision – children should always ask a parent, caregiver, or other trusted adult for help before taking medicines.
- Read and follow the *Drug Facts* label every time you or your children use a medicine.
- Carefully follow the dosage directions on the *Drug Facts* label to avoid an overdose.
- Never use household spoons to measure medicine – only use the dosing device packaged with an OTC medicine.
- Never take medicines with the same active ingredient at the same time to avoid an overdose of that ingredient.
- Communicate with other caregivers in your home to prevent double-dosing errors.
- Call the **Poison Control Center** (also called the **Poison Help Line**) at **1-800-222-1222** if you have any questions or if a medicine mistake occurs.

Safe Medicine Storage and Disposal

- Store all medicines up, away, and out of sight of young children.
- Make sure that child safety caps are locked on all medicines after use.
- Keep the medicine and the dosing device it came with together.
- Remind visitors to keep luggage, purses, or anything else that might have medicines in it, out of children’s reach and sight.
- Check the use-by and expiration dates on OTC medicines and safely dispose of any that are outdated.
- Mix leftover or expired OTC medicines with coffee grounds or kitty litter for safe disposal.



Here’s to keeping families safe!



Please visit
www.ymiclassroom.com/otcmedsafety-families
for more *OTC Medicine Safety* resources, including two new animated videos: *A Social Media Challenge* and *Sidelined at Practice*.

1. America’s Poison Centers’ National Poison Data System. Data covers 2011–2021 annual average, ages 0–19.



SEGURIDAD DE LOS OTC MEDICAMENTOS DE VENTA LIBRE

CARTA REPRODUCIBLE

PARA LAS FAMILIAS

Estimados padres y cuidadores:

¿Sabían que más de 85,000 niños, de 19 años o menos, requieren atención médica cada año debido a errores o al mal uso de los medicamentos?¹

A medida que los niños crecen, comienzan a asumir más responsabilidades: en casa, en la escuela e incluso con su salud. Por eso es tan importante que las familias ayuden a los niños a aprender cómo tomar decisiones seguras antes de asumir un papel más activo en su cuidado personal, incluido el uso de medicamentos.

Dado que los medicamentos de venta libre (OTC) pueden comprarse en una tienda sin receta médica, los jóvenes suelen suponer erróneamente que no necesitan tener cuidado con ellos. Sin embargo, los medicamentos OTC pueden causar daños si no se utilizan de forma correcta. Para evitar errores o usos indebidos de medicamentos, asegúrense de que todos los miembros de su hogar sepan leer y seguir la etiqueta Drug Facts (Información sobre el medicamento).

Sus hijos ya han comenzado a aprender sobre la importancia de la seguridad de los medicamentos en la escuela. Este es el momento perfecto para aprovechar ese conocimiento y asegurarse de que todos en su hogar se sientan listos para manejar los medicamentos de manera responsable. Cuando las familias trabajan juntas para crear un plan de acción de medicamentos, ayudan a mantener a todos seguros y saludables.

Utilicen la lista de verificación a continuación para asegurarse de que su familia esté "lista para los medicamentos OTC".



Organizado por



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Desarrollado con el apoyo de la Asociación Nacional de Enfermeras de las Escuelas (National Association of School Nurses).

Medidas de seguridad para medicamentos

- Asegúrense de que todos los medicamentos OTC estén debidamente etiquetados y almacenados en su envase original.
- Nunca mezclen medicamentos: consérvelos en recipientes separados y etiquetados.
- Enséñenles a sus hijos que nunca deben tomar ningún medicamento sin la aprobación y supervisión de un adulto; los niños siempre deben pedir ayuda a un padre, cuidador u otro adulto de confianza antes de tomar medicamentos.
- Lean y sigan la etiqueta *Drug Facts* cada vez que ustedes o sus hijos utilicen un medicamento.
- Sigán con atención las instrucciones de dosificación en la etiqueta *Drug Facts* para evitar una sobredosis.
- Nunca utilicen cucharas domésticas para medir el medicamento, solo utilicen el dosificador que viene con un medicamento OTC.
- Nunca tomen medicamentos con los mismos ingredientes activos al mismo tiempo para evitar una sobredosis de ese ingrediente.
- Comuníquense con otros cuidadores en su hogar para evitar errores de dosis doble.
- Llamen al **Centro de control de envenenamiento** (también llamado **Línea de ayuda por envenenamiento**) al **1-800-222-1222** si tienen alguna pregunta o si se produce un error con un medicamento.

Almacenamiento y eliminación seguros de medicamentos

- Guarden todos los medicamentos en un lugar alto, lejos y fuera de la vista de los niños pequeños.
- Asegúrense de que los tapones de seguridad para niños estén bloqueados en todos los medicamentos después de usarlos.
- Conserve juntos el medicamento y el dosificador con el que vino.
- Recuérdenles a los visitantes que guarden el equipaje, las carteras o cualquier otro elemento que pueda contener medicamentos fuera del alcance y la vista de los niños.
- Comprueben las fechas de caducidad de los medicamentos OTC y desechen de forma segura los que estén caducados.
- Mezclen los medicamentos OTC sobrantes o caducados con granos de café o arena para gatos para desecharlos de manera segura.

¡Por la seguridad de las familias!



Visite

www.ymiclassroom.com/otcmedsafety-families

para obtener más recursos sobre la Seguridad de los medicamentos OTC, incluidos dos videos animados nuevos: A Social Media Challenge (Un desafío de las redes sociales) y Sideline at Practice (A un costado durante la práctica).

¹ Sistema Nacional de Datos Toxicológicos de la Asociación Americana de Centros de Control de Envenenamientos. Los datos cubren el promedio anual entre 2011 y 2021, edades de 0 a 19.