

OTC MEDICINE SAFETY REVIEW: INFORMATIONAL TEXT ANALYSIS

Students read informational texts and strengthen their analysis skills while learning about a critical topic — medicine safety.

TIME: 45 minutes

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

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

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Copies of the following reproducible activity sheets for each student in the class:
 - ♦ **Activity 8: Editing an OTC Medicine Safety Article** (3 pages)
 - ♦ **Handout A: Informational Text Features**
 - ♦ **Handout B: Text Feature Options**
 - ♦ **Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety Mini Poster**
- **OTC Medicine Safety Answer Key**
- **OTC Medicine Safety for Families** (letter in English and Spanish)
- Pens/pencils
- Whiteboard/digital display screen

Note: All Unit resources and digital assets featured on page 2 can be accessed at www.ymiclassroom.com/lesson-plans/otcmedsafety-teachers_5-6/.

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

1. Review what students know and have learned about medicine, such as the purposes of medicines, types of medicines, medicine safety, etc. Create a word splash on the board to record students' ideas.
2. After students brainstorm ideas, remind them that they should *only* take medicine with the approval and 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 central ideas of the text.
4. Use the **Informational Text Features** handout to review the relevant text features: title, section heading, pull-out quote, diagram, and glossary. Prompt students to suggest why a writer would use each feature and how it can help a reader before revealing those columns. Use the **Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety Mini Poster** to point out topic-specific examples of some of the text features while also previewing the content of the article.

5. Distribute the **Editing an OTC Medicine Safety Article** activity sheet and point out the blank spaces where students will insert helpful 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 text features used will help readers understand the key ideas in the article.
6. For students who need additional support, distribute copies of the **Text Feature Options** handout.
7. After students have finished editing the article, ask them to complete the "Think It Through" section of the activity. Students 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. Discuss students' answers as a group. See the **Answer Key** for suggested responses.
8. **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.**





Unit 1, Activity 1:

OVER-THE-COUNTER VS. PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES

1. Both
2. Prescription
3. Prescription
4. OTC [remind students that prescription labels and directions must be read carefully as well.]
5. OTC
6. Both
7. Both

Unit 2, Activity 2:

UNDERSTANDING THE DRUG FACTS LABEL

1. Answers might include warnings that the medicine might cause an allergic reaction, that it should not be used when taking certain other medicines, and other reasons why a person should not take the medicine. It's important that a person read this information before taking medicine because it can help avoid preventable side effects.
2. Side effects may include drowsiness and/or excitability, particularly for children.
3. 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 allergic reaction or overdose occurs.
4. The "Directions" section.
5. 1-800-222-1222

Unit 2, Activity 3:

FIND A DRUG FACTS LABEL SCAVENGER HUNT

Answers will vary.

Unit 3, Activity 4:

RESPONSIBLE MEDICINE DOSING

1. At 8 a.m. the next day. After that, no more doses should be given until 8 p.m.
2. a. 2.5 mL
b. 2.5 mL
3. Using 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 talking with family members about the information provided on the *Drug Facts* label; use of proper dosing devices; the consequences of not using proper dosing devices; the importance of understanding dosing information.

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:

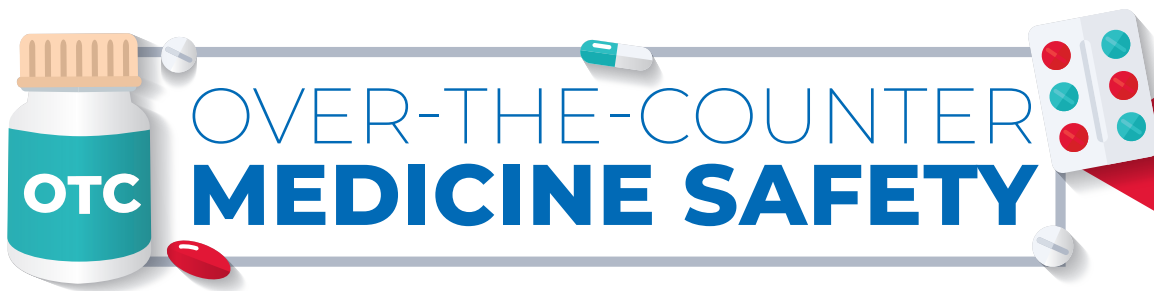
OTC MEDICINE SAFETY FOR THE COMMUNITY

Answers will vary.

Unit 5, Activity 8:

EDITING AN OTC MEDICINE SAFETY ARTICLE

Answers will vary.



SKILLS:

Critical thinking,
reading informational text,
writing explanatory text

Editing an **OTC Medicine** Safety Article

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

(add title)

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

Did you know that more than 85,000 children, ages 19 and under, require medical attention each year due to medicine mistakes or misuse?¹ 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, market, or other store 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 approval and supervision 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:

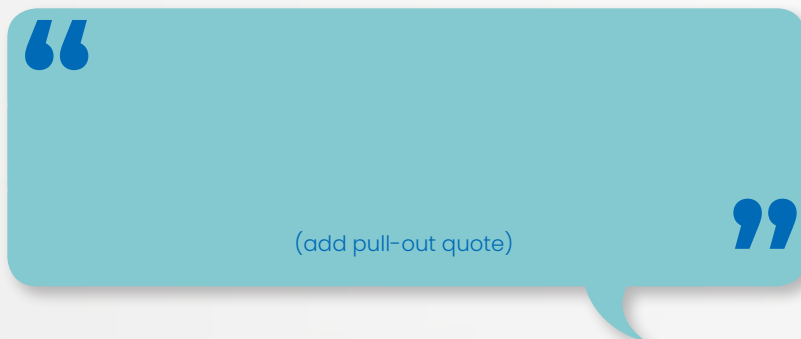
- **ACTIVE INGREDIENTS:** Lists the ingredients in the medicine that make it work.
- **USES:** Describes the symptoms that the medicine treats.
- **WARNINGS:** Provides important safety information, including side effects, questions you should ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and medicines to avoid using at the same time.
- **DIRECTIONS:** Tells the amount or "dose" of medicine to take, how often to take it, and how much you can take in one day. Only use the cup, spoon, dropper, or other dosing device that comes with a medicine. Never try to measure the medicine with your own device.
- **OTHER INFORMATION:** Tells how to store the medicine.
- **INACTIVE INGREDIENTS:** Lists ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms, like preservatives and flavorings. These can be important in the case of an allergy.
- **QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?:** Tells how to call the manufacturer if you have questions about the medicine.



(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.

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



(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 Line, 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

According to America’s Poison Centers, more than 85,000 children, ages 19 and under, require medical attention each year due to medicine mistakes or misuse.¹ Help eliminate this danger! Educate your family and community about medicine safety — and remember to always take medicine with the approval and supervision of a parent or trusted adult.

Glossary

_____ :	_____ :
_____ :	_____ :
_____ :	_____ :
_____ :	_____ :



Think It Through

Read the questions and scenarios below. Write your answers on the lines.
Use the back of the sheet if you need more space.

Part I

TEXT FEATURES: EXPLAIN YOUR REASONING

Explain the text features you added, 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. How would the diagram or illustration added to the article help the reader understand the text?

4. Why is the pull-out quote you chose so important to the central idea of the article?

Part II

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS

Respond to the following scenarios using evidence from the text to explain your thinking.

5. 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?

6. Your younger sibling took some OTC medicine because she thought it looked like candy. You suggest calling the Poison Help Line. 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?

7. 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?



Informational Text Features

Directions: Read about text feature options that writers might use in articles.

TEXT FEATURE	WHY A WRITER WOULD USE IT	HOW IT CAN HELP THE READER
Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize the central idea of the entire article Get the reader's attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start to understand the main idea
Section Heading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize the main idea of a section of the article 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predict the main idea of the section
Pull-Out Quote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize a particular fact or experience Get the reader's attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice a key detail from the text Start to understand the tone of the article
Diagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrate and show the parts of a concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visualize the parts of an important idea
Glossary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize key terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key terms Reinforce the meaning of new vocabulary



Text Feature Options

Directions: Use these text feature options to fill in the OTC medicine safety article.

TEXT FEATURE	OPTIONS
Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety • Types of Medications • What Doctors Don't Tell You
Section Heading 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicine Ingredients • Always Follow Directions • The Importance of the <i>Drug Facts</i> Label
Section Heading 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting the Right Dose • Different Dosing Devices • How to Dispose of Medicines
Section Heading 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poison Help • Taking Medicine Safely • What to Do in 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	Purpose
Ingredient A 100 mg	cough suppressant
Ingredient B 150 mg	nasal decongestant
Uses Temporarily relieves:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.



vs.



measuring spoon



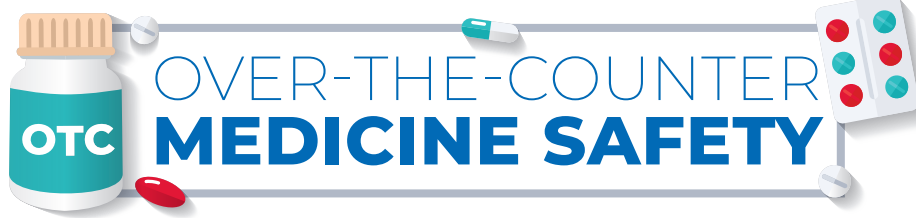
flatware spoon



plastic spoon

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?¹

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."



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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: consérvenlos 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.
- ☐ Conserven 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](http://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.