

OTC MEDICINE SAFETY REVIEW: INFORMATIONAL TEXT ANALYSIS

Students apply textual analysis skills to an informational passage about medicine safety.

TIME: 40 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: OTC Medicine Safety Article**
 - ◊ **Activity 8 Handout A: Informational Text Features**
 - ◊ **Activity 8 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_7-8.

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

1. Review with students what they 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 their 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 about medicine safety. Point out that the author has used a variety of text structures and techniques to engage the reader, but students will need to think about ways to strengthen the article.
4. Review some common informational text structures. Encourage students to brainstorm signal words that may indicate each type of text structure.
 - **Description:** defines or describes a person, place, thing, or idea; signal words include *is*, *are*, *include*, *composed of*
 - **Sequence:** explains the order of events or steps in a process; signal words include *first*, *next*, *then*, *after*, *finally*
 - **Cause/Effect:** explains why an event happens and what happens as a result; signal words include *because*, *since*, *as a result*, *therefore*
 - **Problem/Solution:** describes a problem and proposes one or more solutions; signal words include *challenge*, *issue*, *solve*, *fix*
 - **Compare/Contrast:** describes the similarities and differences between two items or concepts; signal words include *like*, *similarly*, *on the other hand*, *in contrast*
5. Have students brainstorm ways that authors can get readers interested in a topic. Possible responses include:
 - Using surprising facts or statistics
 - Sharing personal stories
 - Addressing the reader directly
 - Referring to familiar stories or examples
 - Incorporating quotations from experts
 - Including a call to action

Optional: Create a list of responses on chart paper for students to reference when completing the activity.
6. Distribute the **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. Their goal is to make sure that the structure of the text will engage readers and help them understand the key ideas in the article.
7. 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 on the chart. Use the **Over-the-Counter Medicine Safety Mini Poster** to point out topic-specific examples of some of these text features. Provide students with the **Text Feature Options** handout if needed.
8. 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.

(Continued on the next page.)



OTC MEDICINE SAFETY REVIEW: INFORMATIONAL TEXT ANALYSIS

(CONTINUED)

- 9. 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:

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>



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY

GRADES 7-8
UNIT 5, ACTIVITY 8

SKILLS:

Critical thinking,
reading informational text,
writing explanatory text

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!

OVER-THE-COUNTER VS. PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES

Medicines fall into two major categories: Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine is bought in a drugstore or grocery 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 points that OTC and prescription medicines share. First, children should not use these medicines without the approval and supervision of a parent or trusted adult. It can be dangerous to misuse or abuse any type of medicine. Always read the *Drug Facts* label carefully and thoroughly before each use.

(add illustration or diagram)

THE DRUG FACTS LABEL

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.



THE “JUST RIGHT” DOSAGE

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.



THE DANGERS OF MEDICINE MISUSE

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!

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 **Poison Help Line, 1-800-222-1222**. Experts answer the phone year-round 24/7. It's free and confidential — and unlike 911, it doesn't have to be an emergency to call.

SAFE STORAGE AND SAFE DISPOSAL

Medicine safety is not just about following directions, it's also about safe storage. Young children are naturally curious. That is why medicines should always be stored up, away, and out of sight and reach of kids.

Medicine should be disposed of safely, too. When cleaning out medicine cabinets, 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

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

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

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

AUTHOR'S CRAFT

Analyze the article by answering these questions. Be sure to support your ideas with evidence from the text.

1. What is the author's main purpose?

2. Who is the author's audience?

3. What technique does the author use in the section "The 'Just Right' Dosage" to engage the reader?

4. What text structures does the author use in the section "The Danger of Medicine Misuse"? How do these text structures help the reader understand the content?

5. Imagine you are revising this article before it is published. Complete the following tasks on a separate sheet of paper.

- Write a new introduction or conclusion to this article.
- Create a graph that would help a reader understand this article.
- Incorporate a new quotation or statistic from your research.

Part II

CRITICAL-THINKING

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

6. 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? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

7. 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? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

8. 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? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.



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.

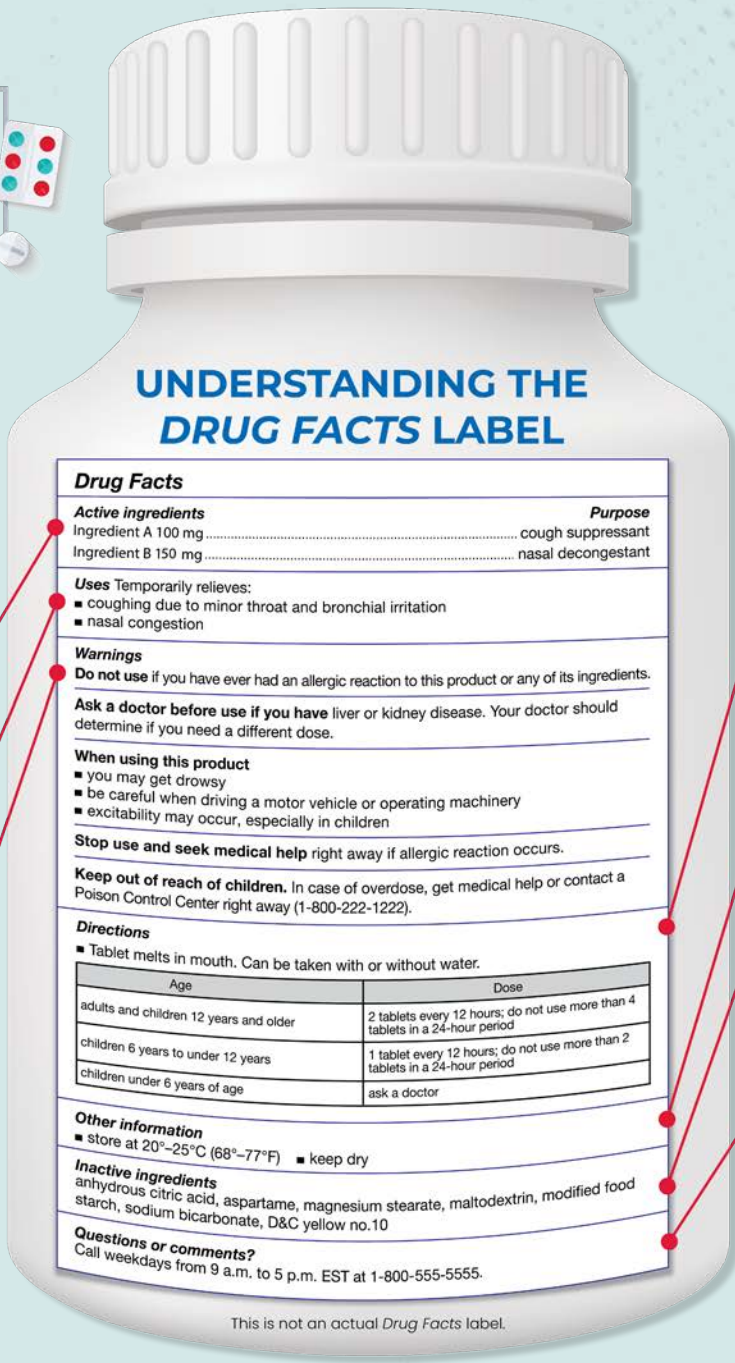
Uses

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



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.

Drug Facts

Active ingredients

Ingredient A 100 mg	cough suppressant	Purpose
Ingredient B 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 (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

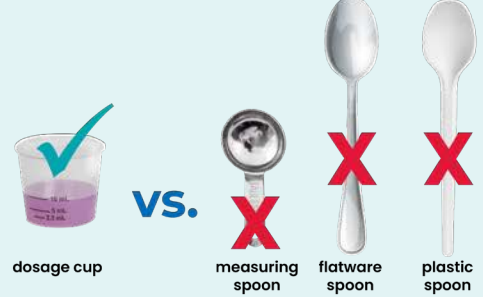
Questions or comments?
Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-555-5555.

This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

MEASURE IT CORRECTLY

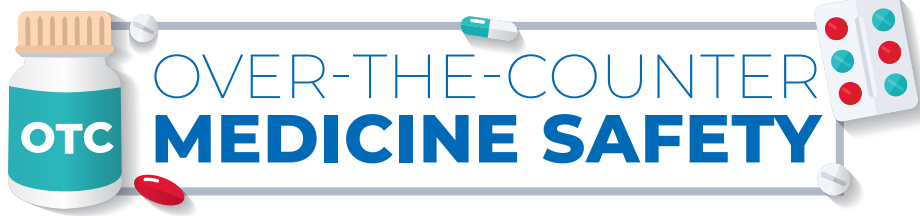
To get an exact measurement, it is important to only use the dosing device that is provided with the medicine. The *Drug Facts* label tells you how much medicine you should take based on your weight and/or age. Never take medicines with the same active ingredient at the same time.

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.”



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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!



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.



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).