

SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT OTC MEDICINE SAFETY!

Students learn how to create a public service announcement (PSA) to communicate important medicine safety information to a targeted audience, while practicing skills that support writing and speaking and listening.

TIME: 30 minutes, plus time to create PSAs

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Identify a central idea and supporting details regarding safe medicine use
- Develop a persuasive text to teach others why medicine safety is important

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Copies of the [Inspire Others to Stay Medicine-Safe!](#) reproducible activity sheet for each student in your class
- Optional: Computer with internet access and whiteboard or projector
- Sample PSAs to share with students, such as poster and video examples from the [Ad Council](#) on emergency preparedness and texting and driving; audio examples from the [CDC on flu vaccines](#)



HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

1. Ask students to imagine they have an urgent message to communicate to their community. What tools could they use to help them reach the most people?
2. Explain to students that a public service announcement (PSA) is a message to raise awareness about an important issue.
3. Emphasize that the purpose of a PSA is to educate people about an issue and encourage them to take action to change a certain behavior.
4. Inform students that PSAs are usually created in the form of commercials on television or streaming services, social media campaigns, radio, billboard, or print ads, or text messages. If possible, show a few examples of PSA campaigns that are suitable for your group and will resonate with them (see sample links under Materials Needed). Have students brainstorm other PSA campaigns they know.
5. Distribute the activity sheet and pair students to work together. Explain to students that they will be creating a PSA focused on OTC medicine safety. Emphasize that their target audience is anyone unfamiliar with the topic, for example younger students, their peers, family members, or people within their community who may not know about how to use medicines safely and may not realize that OTC medicines can cause harm if not used properly.
6. Guide students through the planning and drafting process. Encourage them to use the sidebar on the activity sheet to select key points that will best support their message and to include a call to action.
7. Review all PSAs for appropriateness and safe, correct messaging. Then assist students in distributing, displaying, or presenting their PSAs in the school or community (class website, gallery walk, school assembly, etc.).
8. At the conclusion of the lesson, remind students that they should *never* take medicine without the approval and supervision of a parent or trusted adult. Ask them whether they think their PSAs communicated this message to others.



OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY



GRADES 5-8
BONUS ACTIVITY

SKILLS:
Reading, persuasive writing,
analytical thinking

Inspire Others to Stay **Medicine-Safe!**

Use what you've learned about OTC medicine safety to create a public service announcement (PSA).

Directions: Use the prompts below to organize your thinking. Keep your message short and to the point and select content that specifically targets your intended audience. Write your thoughts on separate paper and answer the questions below to help you.

Topic

OTC Medicine Safety

Target audience (choose one)

Younger students, peers, family members, or community members

Plan Your PSA

1. Pick one central idea and condense it into a clear and simple call-to-action (what you want people to do).

PSA idea: _____

Call-to-action: _____

2. Conduct research to identify supporting facts. Note your sources:

3. Consider your target audience – *What do they need to know? What matters to them?* _____

4. Select a presentation format: a poster, video, radio spot, or another medium. PSA format:

5. Consider which visual elements will best support and enhance your message, and capture the attention of your audience.

Describe the visuals you have in mind here:

Start Drafting

- Create a brief script that supports your call-to-action. As you plan:
 - ◆ Highlight major and minor points that you want to make
 - ◆ Double-check that the research and data you include are accurate
 - ◆ Make sure to include a memorable call-to-action!
- For print format: Write and illustrate your final draft
- For video format: Film and edit your PSA (aim for a 30-second clip)

Share Your PSA

Work with your teacher to share your PSA with your class and to determine the best way to share it with your target audience.

Key Points to Support Your PSA

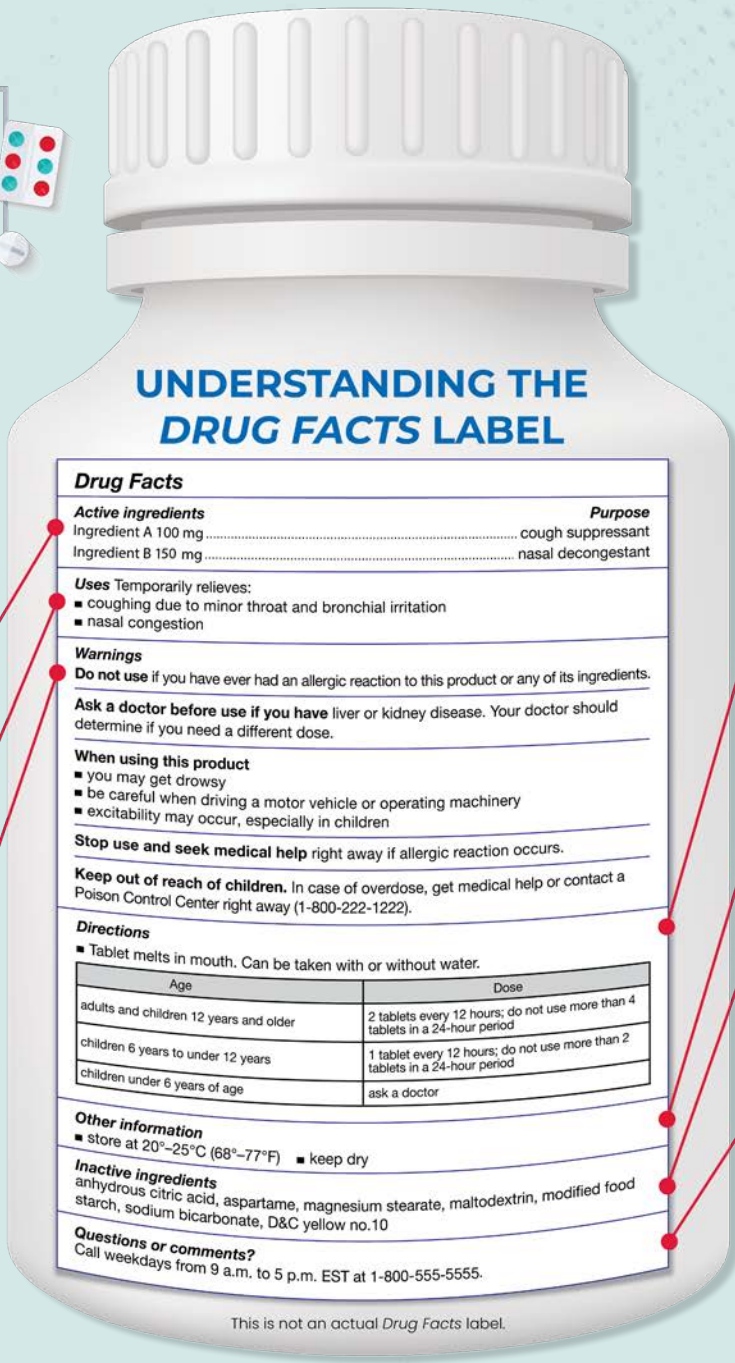
- Young people should only use medicine with the approval and supervision of a parent or trusted adult.
- Like prescription medicines, OTC medicines can cause serious harm if not used properly.
- Read the *Drug Facts* label and follow the **Directions** every single time.
- Only use the dosing device packaged with the medicine.
- Post the **Poison Help Line** in your home: **1-800-222-1222**. Call if you have questions or concerns.
- Remember to store medicines up, away, and out of sight of small children.





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

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



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.

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
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

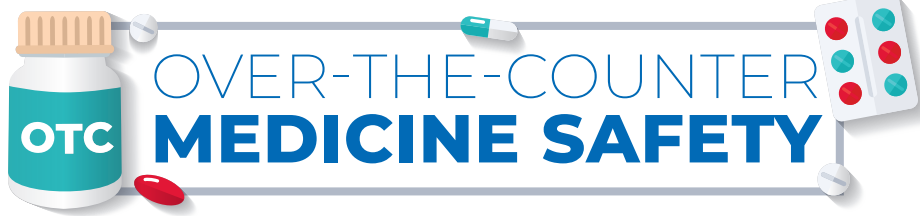
To get an exact measurement, it is important to only use the dosing device that is provided with the medicine. The *Drug Facts* label tells you how much medicine you should take based on your weight and/or age. Never take medicines with the same active ingredient at the same time.

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!



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.