

Medicine Cabinet Activity Guide

ARE YOUR MEDS SAFE?



Teens Take Without Asking

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Background

Use this Guide to set up your very own Medicine Cabinet to raise awareness about prescription drug abuse among teens.

This **Medicine Cabinet Activity** is a reproduction of an activity developed by the Partnership for a Drug Free Canada. They took to the streets to raise awareness about prescription drug abuse among teens for the Secure Your Meds campaign. Setting up a medicine cabinet in public offered the perfect opportunity to talk to Canadians about how accessible medications are in our homes.

The key message is keep your drugs off the street - Secure your Meds and return any used medications. Your medicine cabinet is so easy to access it might as well be out in public.

Set Up



Checklist

- Medicine Cabinet
- 2 – 12 Dram Pill Bottles
- 2 - 20 Dram Pill Bottles
- 4 – 30 Dram Pill Bottles
- 2 – 100 ml
- 2 – 250 ml
- 2 – 500 ml
- 1 - Cold Medicine (Boxed)
- 2 - White Pill Bottles
- Display – How to Talk to your Teen About DRUGS
- Display – Pharma Facts
- Handout - How to Talk to your Teen About DRUGS Rack Card
- Handout – Fentanyl: Information for Teachers, Parents and Caregivers

Target Audience

The **Medicine Cabinet Activity** is intended to provide Parents with information about prescription drug abuse among teens, parenting tips and suggestions to help keep teens safe. However, this campaign is also useful the general adult public to promote safe storage, safe use and safe return of unused prescription medications.

Stats

- 1 in 10 teenagers admit to having taken a legal prescription drug to get high. (DFK accessed online on May 29, 2017).
- Canada along with the U.S. are the biggest consumers of prescription drugs (painkillers in particular) (DFK accessed online on May 29, 2017).
- 300,000 Canadian teens have misused prescription drugs
- 59% of teens who abused pain killers say they got them from home (DFK accessed online on May 29, 2017).
- Half (51%) of Canadian homes contain medications that can be abused. Very few (11%) of those keep them in a safe place. (DFK Tracking Study - Oct 2016)
- 1 in 3 (37%) students felt it would be fairly easy or very easy to obtain prescription pain relievers (CSTADS 2014-2015).
- 50% of students felt it would be fairly easy or very easy to obtain stimulants.
- 10% of teens said they took drugs from friends or relatives without asking. Grandparents and extended family may be another source of meds (DFK accessed online on May 29, 2017).

Myths & Facts

Myth #1: Prescription medication is NOT dangerous because it was prescribed by a doctor.

Fact #1: There is always a risk when taking any medication. Side effects range from mild to severe and even death from overdose. Always take as directed by a physician and make sure your doctor and pharmacist are aware of all prescription, over-the-counter and herbal medications you are taking.

Myth #2: Sharing a friend's or family member's prescription is OK.

Fact #2: Taking any medication without consulting a healthcare professional is dangerous. Further, just like taking street drugs, sharing prescription medication is ILLEGAL.

Myth #3: Prescription drugs are difficult to get.

Fact#3 59% of teens who abused pain killers say they got them from home and not from drug dealers on the street. Grandparents and extended family may be another source of meds.

Myth #4: Prescription drugs are NOT addictive if taken as prescribed.

Fact #4: People who take prescription medication for legitimate health problems can still become addicted.

Myth #5: It's OK to increase the recommended dosage of medications or pain killers to try to increase the effectiveness.

Fact #5: The risk of side-effects, complications, and overdose increases when medications are taken in higher dosages than recommended. Medications are prescribed in a specific amount and over-the-counter medications have maximum daily dosages for your safety.

Myth #6: You can't overdose on over-the-counter medication.

Fact #6: Over-the-counter medications have maximum daily dosages for your safety and also come with the risk of side-effects and other complications. Weight loss medications have been found to increase heart rate and blood pressure and contribute to anxiety, stroke, and heart attack (Mayo Clinic). Large amounts of Tylenol can cause liver damage. Cough medicine can cause abdominal pain, extreme nausea and liver damage.

Myth #7: Fentanyl is not a problem here.

Fact #7: Fentanyl has been found in street-obtained Percocet pills on the West Coast.

Drug Information

Three most commonly abused medications:

1. Opioid Painkillers (codeine, fentanyl, morphine, hydrocodone, oxycodone)
2. Sedatives (diazepam – valium, alprazolam – Xanax, estazolam – ProSom, Zolpidem – Ambien, Zaleplon – Sonata)
3. Stimulants (Adderal, Dexedrine, Ritalin, Desoxyn, Destrostat)

Painkillers should never be used with alcohol, antihistamines, barbiturates, or benzodiazepines. Since these substances slow breathing, their combined effects could lead to life-threatening respiratory depression.

Prescription sedatives depress or slow down the body's functions. These medications are mainly used to relieve anxiety and assist with sleep problems. Sedative abuse is often combined with the use of other drugs like alcohol, other prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, and street drugs like marijuana.

- *Alcohol* – Using sedatives with alcohol can slow both the heart and breathing and may lead to death. When combined with alcohol, the effects and risks of depressants are seriously increased.
- *Prescription drugs* – Some interactions with other drugs can be risky. Sedatives should be used in combination with other medications only under a physician's close supervision.
- *Over-the-counter drugs* – Sedatives should not be combined with any other medication or substance that causes central nervous system depression, including some over-the-counter cold and allergy medications. Doing so may slow the heart and breathing, a serious health risk.

Stimulants are a broad category of substances that increase alertness, attention, and energy, as well as elevate blood pressure, heart rate, and respiration. This category includes commonly

used substances such as caffeine and nicotine, over-the-counter decongestants, (e.g., pseudoephedrine like Sudafed TM), illegal drugs (e.g., cocaine, methamphetamine), and prescription medications. The most common use of prescription stimulants is to treat individuals diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Stimulant abuse often goes along with the use of other substances like alcohol, other prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, and the use of illegal substances like marijuana.

- *Alcohol:* Teens who use alcohol and stimulants together are likely to drink more before feeling the effects of alcohol because of the stimulant effects; The result? When the stimulant effects wear off, the alcohol kicks in.
- *Prescription drugs:* Stimulants should only be used in combination with other medications under a physician's careful supervision.
- *Over-the-counter drugs:* There are dangers associated with mixing stimulants and over the counter drugs that contain decongestants. Blood pressure can become dangerously high or lead to irregular heart rhythms.

Fentanyl is a highly potent drug that many recreational drug users take unknowingly, putting them at high risk of an overdose leading to death.

Parenting Tips

Studies show that a parent may be able to reduce their child's risk of drug use by up to 50%, just by talking to them. One of the main reasons kids will avoid drugs is to not disappoint their parents. Overcoming the "Not my kid" syndrome is the biggest challenge (DFK).

You are an important role model for your teen. Help them make the right choices.
How to Talk to your Teen about DRUGS. What Parents Need to Know

- **START EARLY & TALK OFTEN**
Eat dinner together & do things as a family to improve communication and attachment. Talking openly will help strengthen your relationship with your teen. Take advantage of short 'teachable moments' in the car, watching TV, or at the dinner table.
- **SET AN EXAMPLE**
Be responsible about your own use of alcohol & other drugs.
- **BE OPEN**
Negotiate limits, family rules & consequences. Respect your teens' independence. Think about your teen's point of view and listen to what they have to say.

- **PROVIDE A SAFETY NET**
Enforce limits but let your teen know that safety comes first & they can depend on you to help keep them safe.
- **STAY INFORMED**
You don't have to be an expert but be in the know about alcohol & other drugs to help your teen make better choices.
- **CHECK IN**
Know where your teen is & who they are with. Support positive friendships & help them stay connected with school and after school activities. Encourage positive socializing & being involved in the community.
- **LEARN FROM MISTAKES**
Recognize that experimentation & mistakes happen. Help your teen use them as learning opportunities. Focus on facts and not emotions.
- **WATCH FOR SIGNS**
 - Avoiding contact with you
 - Change in sleeping &/or eating patterns
 - Change in behaviour or appearance – mood swings, signs of depression, secretive, slurred speech, red or watery eyes, less grooming, weight loss, etc.
 - Confusion or difficulty concentrating
 - Change with school or activities - lower grades, attendance issues or behaviour problems, loss of interest in sports or hobbies
 - Possession of paraphernalia - pipes, rolling papers, razor blades, syringes, spoons, etc.
 - Presence of new or different friends
- **SEEK HELP**
If you feel your teen has a problem, contact your local Mental Health & Addictions office or your family doctor.

Handout: How to Talk to your Teen about DRUGS Rack Card

Here are some things you can do right now to keep your prescription and over the counter medications out of the wrong hands:

Keep medication in the right hands:

1. Install a medicine cabinet with a lock and key – a simple solution.
2. Store prescription drugs in a safe, locked drawer or a filing cabinet.
3. Keep your medication somewhere outside of your home (e.g., at work).

4. Dispose of any unused drugs safely by returning them to a local pharmacy.
5. Talk to your teens about the dangers of abusing prescriptions drugs.

Source: Drug Free Kids Canada

Campaign Materials

Medication Container Information

1. 12 Dram Pill Bottle
59% of teens who abused pain killers say they got them from home.
2. 12 Dram Pill Bottle
300,000 Canadian teens have misused prescription drugs
3. 20 Dram Pill Bottle
1 in 10 teenagers admit to having taken a legal prescription drug to get high.
4. 20 Dram Pill Bottle
Canada along with the U.S. are the biggest consumers of prescription drugs (painkillers in particular).
5. 30 Dram Pill Bottle
Half of Canadian homes contain medications that can be abused. Very few of those keep them in a safe place.
6. 30 Dram Pill Bottle
10% of teens said they took drugs from friends or relatives without asking. Grandparents and extended family may be another source of meds.
7. 30 Dram Pill Bottle
1 in 3 students felt it would be fairly easy or very easy to obtain prescription pain relievers.
8. 30 Dram Pill Bottle
Half of students felt it would be fairly easy or very easy to obtain stimulants.
9. 100 ml Bottle
Myth: Fentanyl is not a problem here.
Fact: Fentanyl has been found in street-obtained Percocet pills on the West Coast.
10. 100 ml Bottle
Myth: Prescription drugs are NOT addictive if taken as prescribed.
Fact: People who take prescription medication for legitimate health problems can still become addicted.

11. 250 ml Bottle

Myth: Sharing a friend's or family member's prescription is OK.

Fact: Taking any medication without consulting a healthcare professional is dangerous.

Further, just like taking street drugs, sharing prescription medication is ILLEGAL.

12. 250 ml Bottle

Myth: It's OK to increase the recommended dosage of medications or pain killers to try to increase the effectiveness.

Fact: The risk of side-effects, complications, and overdose increases when medications are taken in higher dosages than recommended. Medications are prescribed in a specific amount and over-the-counter medications have maximum daily dosages for your safety

13. 500 ml Bottle

Myth: Prescription medication is NOT dangerous because it was prescribed by a doctor.

Fact: There is always a risk when taking any medication. Side effects range from mild to severe and even death from overdose. Always take as directed by a physician and make sure your doctor and pharmacist are aware of all prescription, over-the-counter and herbal medications you are taking.

14. 500 ml Bottle

Myth: You can't overdose on over-the-counter medication.

Fact: Over-the-counter medications have maximum daily dosages for your safety and also come with the risk of side-effects and other complications. Weight loss medications have been found to increase heart rate and blood pressure and contribute to anxiety, stroke, and heart attack (Mayo Clinic). Large amounts of Tylenol can cause liver damage. Cough medicine can cause abdominal pain, extreme nausea and liver damage.

15. Boxed Cold Medicine

Keep medication in the right hands:

- Install a medicine cabinet with a lock and key – a simple solution.
- Store prescription drugs in a safe, locked drawer or a filing cabinet.
- Keep your medication somewhere outside of your home (e.g., at work).
- Dispose of any unused drugs safely by returning them to a local pharmacy.
- Talk to your teens about the dangers of abusing prescriptions drugs.

16. White Pill Bottle

Three most commonly abused medications:

- Opioid Painkillers (Codeine, Oxycontin)
- Sedatives (Valium, Xanax)
- Stimulants (Adderal, Ritalin)

17. White Pill Bottle

Myth: Prescription drugs are difficult to get.

Fact: 59% of teens who abused pain killers say they got them from home and not from drug dealers on the street. Grandparents and extended family may be another source of meds.

Medicine Cabinet Information

Front Mirror Message

ARE YOUR MEDS SAFE?

Teens Take Without Asking

Inside Door Message:

HELP YOUR KIDS

Before They Help Themselves

SECURE YOUR MEDS

Base Message:

More teens who abuse pain killers say they got them from home than from a dealer on the street.

Supports and Services

Help Lines

HEALTHLINE

811

www.yourhealthline.ca

Mental Health Crisis Line

1-888-737-4668

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

www.kidshelpphone.ca

Mental Health & Addiction Services Offices

Corner Brook

634-4506/4171

Stephenville

643-8740

Port aux Basques

695-6250

Burgeo

886-2185

Deer Lake

635-7830

Norris Point

458-2381

Port Saunders

861-9125

Youth Outreach Workers:

Corner Brook & Area

639-9676

Stephenville & Area

643-2247

Port aux Basques & Area

695-6901

Norris Point & Area

458-2381 Ext. 271

Prevention & Promotion Services

4921/4927 or mha@westernhealth.nl.ca
www.westernhealth.nl.ca/mha

Other Available Resources

PDFC Campaign Videos

- [Teen Takers](#)
- [Keep Your Drugs off the Street](#)
- [Secure Your Meds](#)
- [Rx Take Back](#)
- [Drug Take Back](#)
- [Path of the Pill](#)
- [Pharmacist](#)
- [Chiccah](#)

Western Health Resources

Visit the Western Health Prevention and Promotion website at www.westernhealth.nl.ca/mha for educational resources and promotional materials. Email: mha@westernhealth.nl.ca to request print materials or borrow resources.

Print Materials

- How to Talk to your Teen about Drugs Rack Card
- Party Safer Post Card
- Crisis Line Magnet
- Help Line Business Cards
- Fentanyl Fact Sheet

Vinyl Displays

- How to Talk to your Teen about Drugs (20x36)
- Drug Info (20x36)

For more information or to book resources, please contact:

Regional Addictions Prevention Consultant
Regional Mental Health Promotion Consultant

Telephone: 634-4171

www.westernhealth.nl.ca/mha

mha@westernhealth.nl.ca



Evaluation

Facilitator Feedback Form



Medicine Cabinet Activity FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

Facilitator: _____

Location: _____

Total # of Participants: _____

1. Summary of Participant Feedback (write comments below):

2. What did you like best? What worked well (successes)?

3. What did you like least? What did not work well (challenges)?

4. If we were to do this again, what would you do differently (Recommendations and opportunities for improvement)?

For each statement, indicate how much you Agree or Disagree:

5. I feel overall the activity was successful.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I would recommend that this activity be offered again.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I feel that I had adequate information and support available to implement this activity.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. The activity resources were easy to set-up.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree



Medicine Cabinet Activity FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

9. The activity resources were good quality.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. The activity and resources were appropriate for the participants.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
11. Feedback from participants about the activity and resources was positive.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
12. I felt comfortable facilitating this activity.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
13. The topic of prescription drug misuse is relevant to the target audience.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
14. I feel participants are now more aware of the risks associated with medication use.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
15. I feel this program has increased participant knowledge about medication safety.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. Other Comments:

Thank-you for your feedback!

Please return the completed form to:

Tracey Wells-Stratton
Regional Addictions Prevention Consultant
Blomidon Place, Western Health
PO Box 2005
Corner Brook, NL A2H 6J7

Email: traceywells@westernhealth.nl.ca Fax: (709)634-4888