



Early Education is the Best Medicine

Medicine Safety Parent Fact Sheet

When it comes to teaching children how to stay healthy, it's smart to start early.

One subject where open and honest communication with your children is important, is the safe and proper use of medicine and substance abuse prevention.

As a parent of an elementary school-aged child, it might seem hard to imagine talking to your 5-10 year old about this serious topic. However, **you can take action** today. There are simple ways to begin conversations, provide children with information about the safe use of medicine, and guide them to make good decisions, today and in the future.

Fact

More than **80%** of ER visits for medication overdoses happen because children under 12 have taken medications on their own.



What You Can Do

Keep **ALL** prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter medicine and vitamins locked up and out of reach.



Fact

Each year, more than **70,000** children under 18 end up in the ER due to unintentional medication overdoses.



What You Can Do

- Teach children how to take medicine properly, how to follow directions, and how to read the label.
- Do not tell children that medicine or vitamins are candy, to get them to take it.
- Make sure children know only to take medicine or vitamins from a parent or another trusted grownup.

Fact

Prescription drugs are the drug of choice among 12 and 13 year olds.



What You Can Do

- **Start early!** Educate your children at younger ages to help prevent substance abuse.
- **Explain** that it can be very dangerous to use prescription and over-the-counter medications improperly.
- **Pay attention.** Notice changes in your child's behavior. If you think there may be a problem, ask the school for help.
- Keep **ALL** prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter medicine and vitamins locked up and out of reach.

Fact

One in 5 parents (20 percent) indicates they have given their teen a prescription drug that was not prescribed to them.

What You Can Do

Never share your own prescription medication with your children.

Fact

Teens who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are less likely to use drugs.

What You Can Do

Communicate honestly, openly and **EARLY** about medicine safety, and as children get older, about drugs and substance abuse.



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For more tools and information, visit SmartMovesSmartChoices.org

