

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE SAFETY FOR FAMILIES

Over 20,000 kids per year need medical help due to medicine mistakes or misuse.*

Download more **FREE** resources:
scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/families



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*AAPCC National Poison Data System query parameters: 2011–2016 annual average, ages 0–19, all unintentional and intentional misuse reasons for pharmaceutical exposure, cases en route to a healthcare facility or treatment recommended by a specialist in poison information, all outcomes.

All program materials are FREE.



Keeping Your Children Medicine-Safe

As children get older, they often 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 children learn how to make safe choices.

One important topic to discuss with your child is **medicine safety**. Prescription medication is specially ordered for one person by a doctor and is only available from a pharmacist. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines can be purchased from a store without a doctor's prescription, but they still need to be treated with the same amount of care! It is important to read and follow the *Drug Facts* label every time.

Misuse of any medicine is dangerous, whether it is a prescription or an OTC medicine.

Communication is an essential part of keeping your child healthy and safe. Make sure that your child knows to always communicate with you before taking any medicine, and to only use medicine under the supervision of a trusted adult.



Watch the video “**Top 5 Tips for Keeping Your Kids Safe**” for more information:
scholastic.com/otc-tips-video

Know Your Facts

- ▶ Research shows that students begin to self-medicate around the age of **11**.
- ▶ Get free, confidential answers to your medicine questions by calling the Poison Help number, **1-800-222-1222**, or visiting poisonhelp.org.

Medicine Action Plan

Work together as a family to create a medicine action plan to help keep everyone safe and healthy! Have your child check off each item as you complete it together.

- Which adults should your child talk to if he or she is sick and may need medicine?
Provide options if a primary caregiver is unavailable.
- Where will medicines be stored in your home? Remember that they should be up, away, and out of sight!
- How will you make sure that each medicine and the dosing device it comes with are kept together?
- How will your family make sure that the child safety caps are locked on all medicines?
- How will you make sure that visitors keep any of their medicines out of children's reach and sight?
- Program the Poison Help number into your phone: **1-800-222-1222**. Bookmark the Interactive Poison Help Website: poisonhelp.org.





Tools for Safely Using OTC Medicines With Your Children

There is a huge variety of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines available today, from pills to lozenges to eye drops and beyond. Fortunately, each package will include the same important resource—the *Drug Facts* label. Each *Drug Facts* label will tell you:

- ▶ What **active ingredients** make the medicine work
- ▶ The **uses** for the medicine (the symptoms it treats)
- ▶ **Warnings** about who should not take the medicine, potential side effects, and when to speak to a doctor
- ▶ **Directions** for taking the medicine—including how much and how often
- ▶ **Other information** (such as storage instructions)

- ▶ What **inactive ingredients** the medicine contains (helpful if anyone in your family has an allergy)

The *Drug Facts* label is a vital resource to help ensure that your family members are using medicines safely.



Watch the *Drug Facts* label video from the FDA with your family to learn more about this important resource: bit.ly/fda-otc-video

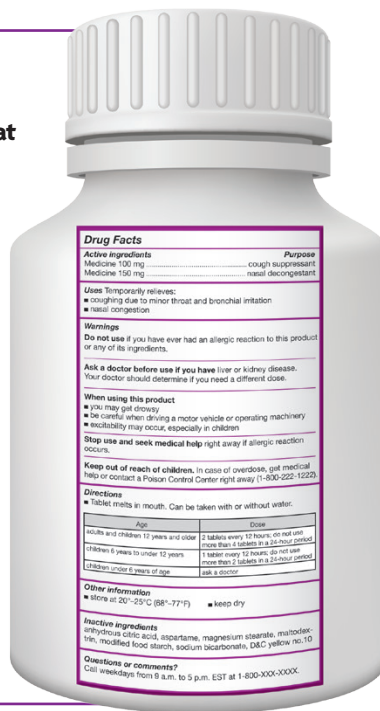
Know Your Facts

- ▶ Every year, America's poison control centers manage over **600,000** medicine exposure cases involving children, tweens, and teens.¹
- ▶ Double dosing is one of the leading causes of medicine mistakes.²

Get to Know Your Medicine Label

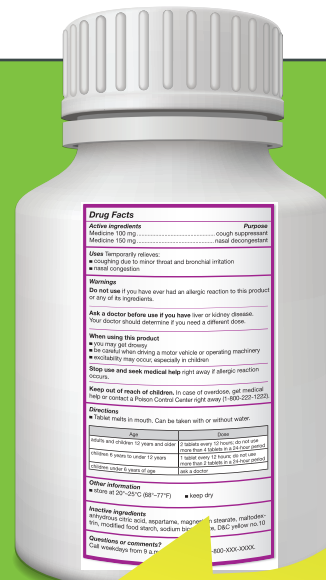
Work together as a family to learn more about children's OTC medicines that you have in your home using the *Drug Facts* label on each. Can you answer each question?

- ▶ What are the active ingredients?
- ▶ Are any side effects listed (under "Warnings")?
- ▶ Where is the poison control number on this label?
- ▶ What is the correct dose for your child to take if he or she is sick?
- ▶ How frequently should your child take the medicine if he or she is sick?
- ▶ Is the dose or frequency different for a younger sibling?
- ▶ What type of medicine-dosing device came with the medicine? (Make sure it is stored with the medicine!)



WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

Drug Facts help you understand the medicines that you take and how to take them safely. All medicines should be taken under the direct supervision of a parent or trusted adult.



Drug Facts

Active Ingredients	Purpose
Medicine 100 mg	cough suppressant
Medicine 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 your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

Directions

- Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water.

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-XXX-XXXX.

The **Uses** section of the label tells you the symptoms the medicine treats.

Look in the **Warnings** section to learn about what other medicines you should not take with this medicine, side effects the medicine can cause, when you should ask a doctor before taking the medicine, and other important safety information like when to stop taking the medicine and talk to a doctor.

The **Directions** section of the label tells you the amount of medicine (dose) you can take, how often you can take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

Some medicines also have a **Questions or Comments?** section of the label that gives you the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

The **Active Ingredients** section of the label tells you the names of the active ingredients in the medicine and what jobs they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress cough). Some medicines may have more than one active ingredient.

In the **Other Information** section of the label you'll find other things you need to know such as how to store the medicine.

You'll find a list of any preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms in the **Inactive Ingredients** section on the **Drug Facts** label. These can be important to know if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

OTC MEDICINE FACTS

1. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines need to be treated with the same care and caution as prescription (Rx) drugs.
2. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about an OTC medicine.
3. Only use the dosing device that comes with your OTC medicine.
4. Take only one medicine at a time that contains the same kind of active ingredient.
5. All medicines, including OTC medicines, should be put up, away, and out of sight after every use.



ASK FOR HELP

Poison control centers are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Calls are fast, free, and confidential.

Program the Poison Help number into your phone: **1-800-222-1222**

Bookmark the Interactive Poison Help Website: **poisonhelp.org**



Safely Measuring, Storing, and Disposing of Medicine

Using the correct dose of medicine is a science—too little won't be effective, and too much could be harmful. Fortunately, each medicine includes the “just right” amount on the *Drug Facts* label. Make sure to follow the directions closely based on your child's weight and age. Many medicines also come with a dosing device (such as a cup or syringe) that is customized to that medicine to ensure an exact dose.

You can take steps to keep your family safe by making sure that all medicines are kept **up**, **away**, and **out of sight**. This applies to health-related items that you may not typically think of as medicine, such as vitamins, supplements, and eye drops, since these can still be harmful if they are misused.

Make sure that medicines are not left on the counter or in a bag that children can reach, and be careful to replace caps tightly and put medicines away after each use. Make sure to communicate clearly with any other caregivers to avoid any “double-dosing” errors.

It's also important to make sure that medicines are disposed of properly. Check the label for safe disposal information, and find out if there are medicine take-back programs in your area. Otherwise, as recommended by the FDA, you can dispose of most medicines by mixing them with a substance such as dirt or kitty litter, placing them in a sealed plastic bag, and then throwing the sealed bag into your household trash.



Play the Hidden Home Hazards game as a family to learn more about safe storage: [scholastic.com/otc-med-safety/hazards](https://www.scholastic.com/otc-med-safety/hazards)

Know Your Facts

- ▶ **Over 20,000 kids per year** need medical help due to medicine mistakes or misuse.³
- ▶ Get free, confidential answers to your medicine questions by calling the Poison Help number, **1-800-222-1222**, or visiting [poisonhelp.org](https://www.poisonhelp.org).

Medicine Safety Hunt

How safe is each room in your home? Work together as a family to make sure that all types of health-related items are up and away in a safe location. Look for all of the following:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| ▶ Liquid medicines | ▶ Prescription medicines |
| ▶ Pills | ▶ Other healthcare products or potentially dangerous products, such as detergent pods |
| ▶ Medicated creams | |
| ▶ Cough drops | |
| ▶ Eye drops | |
| ▶ Vitamins | |
| ▶ Supplements | |

1. Are all medicines up, away, and out of sight?
2. Is the medicine dosing device stored with the medicine?
3. When disposing of a medicine, do you follow the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's guidelines? You can find them at [bit.ly/fda-disposal](https://www.bit.ly/fda-disposal).
4. Is any medicine past its expiration date?



Your Children and Medicine: Safe Use and Misuse

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are safe and effective when used as directed, but it's important to take steps to keep your family safe from medicine misuse. Medicine misuse can take many forms and can include:

- ▶ Taking larger or more frequent doses than the *Drug Facts* label indicates
- ▶ Taking medicines for reasons that are not listed on the label
- ▶ Taking a medicine for longer than listed on the label
- ▶ Taking multiple medicines with the same kind of active ingredient

Medicine misuse can cause side effects and have harmful—even life-threatening—consequences, so it is important to make sure that all family members are following your family's medicine action plan. Explain that taking more of a medicine won't make it work faster and that *Drug Facts* labels should be followed carefully.

The Poison Help number, **1-800-222-1222**, or **poisonhelp.org** are excellent resources if you are concerned about medicine misuse. With this free and confidential service, experts at your local poison control center can answer your questions about how to take or give medicine, about possible medicine mistakes, or about an accidental ingestion of medicine. (Unlike 911, Poison Help is not an emergency-only number.) You can also talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information or advice about the medications your family takes.



To learn more about medicine misuse and how to keep your family safe, access the Information Resource Sheets (available in six languages) at scholastic.com/otc-med-safety/families.

Know Your Facts

- ▶ Only **54%** of tweens know OTC medicine can be dangerous when misused.⁴

What Should You Do?

As a family, read each of the following scenarios about OTC medicines. Is this situation safe? Is this misuse? How should the characters handle the situation?

- ▶ Nikita has a headache. Last time she had a headache, her dad gave her some ibuprofen. He isn't home from work yet, so Nikita goes to the medicine cabinet and takes a couple of the pills without talking to her dad.
- ▶ Ruben is taking a dose of cough syrup under his mom's supervision. He forgot the dosing device in the cabinet, so he grabs a spoon

from the kitchen drawer to measure his dose of medicine.

- ▶ Every day, Angelica takes a once-a-day allergy medicine. Her mom always reminds her at breakfast. Today, though, it doesn't seem to be working. At lunchtime, Angelica takes another dose of the medicine so she will feel better faster.



Dosage Cup



Our OTC Medicine Safety Checklist

- Read and follow the *Drug Facts* label every time.
- Measure carefully. Keep the medicine and the dosing device it comes with together. Never use household spoons to measure medicine.
- Check that all medicines, vitamins, and supplements are stored up, away, and out of sight of young children. Keep prescription medicines locked away.
- Ensure that the child safety caps are locked on all medicines.
- Remind visitors to keep luggage, purses, or anything else that might have medicines in it out of children's reach and sight.
- Medicines should only be taken with the supervision of an adult or trusted guardian. Communicate with other caregivers to prevent double-dosing errors.
- Make sure your children know that using OTC and prescription medicines incorrectly can cause harm.
- Program the Poison Help number into your phone: **1-800-222-1222**.
- Bookmark the Interactive Poison Help Website: **poisonhelp.org**.

Emergency Contacts

Post these numbers in a prominent place in your home. Remember to save them into your cell phone in case of emergency.

Family Doctor Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Pharmacy Name: _____

Phone Number: _____



Poison Help Number: **1-800-222-1222**

Open 24 hours a day *every day of the year*. Calls are fast, free, and confidential.

Interactive Poison Help Website: **poisonhelp.org**

All of these resources and more are available for FREE:
scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety/families