

DRUG SAFETY

PROTECTING YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS – AND YOUR FAMILY

Prescription drugs help us fight off illness and can improve health. They can also be dangerous if the wrong person takes them, or if they're taken in the wrong amount. It's important they be taken only as directed and stored safely.



PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE: THE FACTS

Prescription drug abuse kills more than 15,000 people in the U.S. every year – that's more than illegal drugs, like cocaine and heroin combined. Abuse often begins at home. Most people who illegally use narcotic pain drugs say they got them from friends or family, or by stealing them from medicine cabinets.

CHILD SAFETY: THE FACTS

Every year, nearly one million children under the age of 5 interact with poisonous medications and household chemicals.¹ More than 60,000 young adults go to the ER from taking medications they shouldn't have.²

PRESCRIPTION DRUG SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR HOME

DO

Keep drugs out of children's reach. Lock them up if you can. Ask your pharmacist for child-resistant caps.

Keep track of your prescriptions. If you have young adults in your home, make a list of your drugs and count them once every couple of weeks to make sure the amount is correct.

Dispose of your drugs properly. For instructions on the proper disposal of unwanted or unused medications, visit the FDA website at: <http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm101653.htm>

DON'T

Make it easy. Store narcotics and other powerful drugs in a locked medicine cabinet.

Save for "next time." Dispose of remaining drugs when your treatment is over. Never keep extra prescription drugs for future use.

Share your medication. Your prescription is **YOURS ONLY!** Another person could suffer dangerous side effects by taking them.

ACCIDENTAL POISONING: WHAT TO DO

If you believe a child has swallowed a potentially poisonous substance:

Know your emergency numbers. If the child has collapsed or is not breathing, dial **911**. If the child is awake and alert, call the poison hotline at **800.222.1222** and follow the operator's instructions.

Know the signs. Reactions can vary. Look for vomiting, drowsiness and any residue or odor around the child's mouth. For some products, there may not be immediate symptoms. So, even if you believe the child has ingested something, call the poison hotline.

Stay calm. You need to talk with emergency personnel and they need your information to be clear and understandable.

Don't give the child anything by mouth until advised by the poison hotline or emergency personnel.

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/safechild/NAP/overviews/poison.html>

2. <http://www.cdc.gov/features/PoisonPrevention/>