



# Keeping Kids Safe Around Medicine

## What you need to know:

Every year, more than 59,000 children go to an emergency room for medicine poisoning. That's 1 child every 9 minutes. Almost all of these visits are because the child got into medicine while their parent or caregiver wasn't looking. You can keep this from happening to your child by learning how to store, dose and dispose of medicines safely. Here's how:

### Store Medicines Safely

- » **Put medicines up and away and out of sight.** Make sure that all medicines, including vitamins and adult medicines, are stored out of reach and out of sight of children. Consider using a cabinet lock on the cupboard or a locked box for storage.
- » **Consider places where kids get into medicine.** Kids get into medication in all sorts of places, like in purses and nightstands.
- » **Consider products you might not think about as medicines.** Most parents know to store medicine up and away. But they don't always think about products such as diaper rash remedies or eye drops, which may not seem like medicine but actually are.



Where are children finding medicine?



27%  
ground or misplaced



20%  
purse/bag/  
wallet



20%  
counter/dresser/  
table/nightstand



15%  
pillbox or  
bag of pills



12%  
other  
(known)



6%  
cabinet/  
drawer

(2011 emergency room visits; of the 14% of cases known.)

86% of emergency room visits for medicine poisoning were due to the child getting into adult medicine.



38%  
grandparent's

8%  
father's



12%  
siblings

31%  
mother's



5%  
aunt's/  
uncle's

6%  
known/  
other

- » **Be alert to visitors' medicine.** Remind babysitters and visitors to keep purses, bags or coats that have medicine in them up and away and out of sight.
- » **Close your medicine tightly after every use.** Buy medicines that come in child-resistant packages when you can. But remember, child-resistant does not mean child-proof, and some children will still be able to get into medicine given enough time and determination.
- » **Put medicine out of reach after every use.** When you need to give another dose in just a few hours, it may be tempting to keep medicine close at hand. Accidents can happen fast. It only takes a few seconds for children to get into medicine. Be sure to put medicine up and away after every use. Set an alarm on your watch or phone or write yourself a note as a reminder.

Put your medicines  
**up AND away**  
 and out of sight

## Give Medicines Safely

- » **Use the dosing device that comes with the medicine.** Kitchen spoons won't measure the same amount as the dosing device.
- » **Check the active ingredients listed on the label.** Make sure you don't give your child more than one medicine with the same active ingredient. This can result in an overdose. If you are unsure what is in the medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- » **Communicate with caregivers.** If you are depending on someone else to give your child medicine, communicate clearly to avoid errors. Write instructions including what medicine to give, when to give it and the dosage.
- » **Don't call medicine candy.** Explain to children why you must be the one to give it to them. Never tell children medicine is candy so they'll take it, even if your child does not like to take medicine.

## Get Rid of Medicine Safely

- » **Clean out your medicine cabinet.** Many communities have a medicine take-back program. This is an easy way to get rid of your unused or expired medicines. To dispose of it yourself, put the medicine into a sealable plastic bag with water. Add kitty litter or coffee grounds to medicine to make it less appealing for children or pets.
- » **Put the Poison Control Center contact information into your phones: 1-800-222-1222 or [www.poison.org](http://www.poison.org).** You can also put the number on your refrigerator or another place in your home where babysitters and caregivers can see it.



For more information contact Safe Kids Grand Forks at 701.780.1489 or visit [safekidsgf.com](http://safekidsgf.com).

