

Medication Safety Patrol Toolkit for Elementary- Aged Children



We are a medication-taking society, consuming billions of medications in the U.S. alone each year. Prescription and over-the-counter medicines are typically accessible and visible in our homes, and children should understand prescription and over-the-counter medication safety at an early age. **What follows is a collection of age-appropriate, engaging resources that educate children (grades K-5) about medication safety principles, equipping them with a foundation for understanding how to use medicines safely before they enter their teen and adult years.**

Overview of the toolkit

This toolkit highlights four medication safety principles:

1. Only take medicine from individuals that a parent (or guardian) gives permission.
2. Do not share medication or take someone else's medication.
3. Keep medications in their original containers to avoid confusion with candy or other medicines.
4. Always store medicine in a safe place, such as a locked cabinet or a high shelf that children can't reach.

A "safety patrol" theme reiterates these four principles throughout the games and activities. The versatile resources also utilize a variety of teaching and learning techniques - they may be used in small or large groups, as stand-alone activities, or in combination.

The toolkit consists of four sections:

1. Active Stations:

- Station 1: Q&A Safety Rounds
- Station 2: Prescription Label Lookouts
- Station 3: Medicine Hideouts: Safe or Unsafe?
- Optional application station: Medication Safety Skits

2. Games:

- Medication Safety Patrol: Good Choice or Bad Choice?
- Medication Safety Patrol: Trivia
- Medication Safety Patrol: Is it candy or medicine?

3. Supplemental Worksheets:

- Pharmacy Crossword Puzzle
- Prescription Puzzlers
- Patrol Drawings
- Safe Sharing Worksheet

4. Visual Aids:

- Medicine vs. Candy
- Safe Medication Storage
- Prescription Label

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Lit. No. 5CR16-514361 (11/2016)

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Getting
Started

Toolkit Introduction

Interested in educating children about medication safety but aren't sure how to start the conversation? This toolkit provides adults with age-appropriate activities and games that teach key medication safety principles in an engaging manner. These educational resources utilize a variety of teaching and learning techniques and are versatile—they may be used in small or large groups, as stand-alone activities or in combination.



Depending on your goals and experience, you may need some guidelines to plan and execute your educational program. If you are an educator, you may wish to supplement a lesson plan with a few of these resources, or simply conduct one or two brief activities when time allows. If you are a pharmacist, doctor, nurse, or other health professional, you may want to partner with a school, club, or youth group to deliver the message. Other adults or teens may also lead the programming. What follows is a brief discussion of guidelines and featured questions to consider when planning your program.

Where do I start?

Your first task is to establish your audience and venue specifics (e.g., time, place). This information will shape all other program planning, including the activities you conduct with the children.

Who is my audience?

The materials provided in this toolkit are appropriate for elementary-aged children (grades K-5). Some activities may be better suited for younger children (grades K-2) while others may be more appropriate for older children (grades 3-5).

I'm not a teacher, but I'd like to spread awareness about this important topic. Where should I present?

How do I make the arrangements?

There are a number of logical places to host your program, though all require upfront coordination with the host organization. Below is a list of potential possibilities (including suggested contact persons for each venue):

- Schools (teachers, school nurses, administrators)
- After-school organizations such as 4H, Boy/Girl Scouts, community recreation centers (club advisors)
- Religious youth groups (faith-based organization leaders)
- Sports teams (local coaches)

In a short email or phone call to potential hosts, introduce yourself and indicate your interest in providing an educational program about medication safety. Be as flexible as possible with the timing of your event, and emphasize your willingness to adapt to their needs.

How long should my program be?

Children have a very short attention span (10-15 minutes); therefore, it may be helpful to view your program as a series of 10-15 minute blocks. A 30-60 minute program is usually appropriate, allowing you to complete 2-4 activities from the toolkit.

I know where and when I'll be presenting my program. Now, what will I do?

After you've identified your audience, venue specifics, and program length, you can now select the activities you will conduct. You can customize your program itinerary from a menu of activities including:

1. Active Stations
2. Games
3. Supplemental Worksheets
4. Visual Aids

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Safe medication practices for life.

These activities cover a wide range of skill sets—please use your judgment (or that of a teacher/group leader) to determine which activities are appropriate for your audience. The table below features sample programs based on program length. Be creative though—these are only suggestions!

15 minute program:

- 10 minutes—Medication Safety Patrol: Is it candy or medicine? game
- 5 minutes—Discussion, Question/Answer session

30-45 minute program (1 station plus a game)

- 10-15 minutes—Station 1: Q&A Safety Rounds
- 25 minutes—Medication Safety Patrol: Trivia game
- 5 minutes—Discussion, Question/Answer session

60 minute program: (3 active stations)

- 15 minutes—Station 1: Q&A Safety Rounds
- 15 minutes—Station 2: Prescription Label Lookouts
- 15 minutes—Station 3: Medicine Hideouts: Safe or Unsafe?
- 10 minutes—Discussion, Question/Answer session

Each active station, game, or worksheet includes a facilitator guide that contains a synopsis, list of required materials, instructions, answers, and talking points. To extend the experience after you've completed your program, we encourage you to disseminate one of the handouts featured in the Supplemental Worksheets section.

Communicating with Parents/Guardians

Parents or guardians serve a critical role in educating children about medication safety. We encourage you to print one copy of the Parent/Guardian Letter per child, sign the letter, and ask each child participant to take the letter home. This letter informs parents/guardians of the medication safety principles the child learned, and encourages them to continue this important conversation at home.

Can I adapt an activity?

Yes! In fact, we encourage you to pay close attention to both the room layout and available technology before your program, so that you can make adaptations if needed. For example, if you plan to play the Medication Safety Patrol: Is it candy or medicine? game but do not have access to a computer and/or projector, you may wish to use the PowerPoint file as a guide and play the game using clear plastic bags of medicine and candy as visual aids.

Is there anything that I shouldn't do?

Don't just "lecture". While discussion of answers and select talking points is important following any activity, try to engage the children in this discussion as much as possible, reducing the amount of time you "simply talk to them".

- Avoid using complicated scientific terms and vocabulary. Recall the age of your audience, and try to simplify your language so that the children will understand what you are speaking about.
- Do not be nervous to work with children! Step-out of your comfort zone, speak with energy and enthusiasm, and your program will be a success!

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Medication Safety Patrol: Badge Coloring Worksheet

Instructions:

1. Print enough copies of this document to distribute one badge per participant.
2. Cut-out the badges.

3. Distribute one badge to each participant.

4. Ask participants to write their names and color their badge.

5. Consider having participants wear their badge, hang it in a well-trafficked area, or adhere it to one of their personal belongings.



Congratulations to _____

for earning your Medication Safety Patrol badge!



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for earning your Medication Safety Patrol badge!



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