



This is a great take-action-today tip to read and share with family, friends and parent networks. The more people rid their homes of unwanted, unneeded and expired medications, the less likely such drugs will inadvertently make their way into the hands of our students.

Know! To Spring Clean Your Medicine Cabinet

Spring is here and for many of us that means spring cleaning. Time to clear out the winter clutter and freshen up our homes. As you are making your spring cleaning checklist, you are encouraged to add this potentially life-saving chore to your list:

✓ **Clear out the Medicine Cabinet**

Why is spring cleaning your medicine cabinet so important?

- Because the number of teens being admitted to hospitals and rehab facilities for prescription drug-related poisonings and addiction have reached epidemic levels, as well as the number of accidental adolescent deaths - tied to prescription drug overdose.
- Because nearly 1 in 5 teens report abusing medications that were not prescribed to them. The most widely abused drugs include painkillers, ADHD and anti-anxiety medications, sleeping pills and cough syrup.
- Because the number one location where teens acquire these drugs is from the **home medicine cabinets** of family and friends.

There are three key steps to reduce the risk of medicine abuse in your home:
Secure, Monitor and Dispose.

SECURE: Avoid storing medications in an unprotected nightstand or kitchen cabinet or carrying them around in your purse or briefcase. Instead, secure your prescription and over-the-counter medications in a locked cabinet, drawer or safe that is inaccessible to your teens and their friends.

MONITOR: Make note of how many pills or the amount of liquid in each medicine bottle you have in your home. Keep track of refills and be sure you control any medication that is prescribed to your child.

DISPOSE: Limit the supply of drugs in your home by regularly clearing out your unused, unwanted and expired medications.

Talking regularly with kids about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using.

Know! urges you to encourage other parents to join Know!.

[Click here for the Know! Parent Tip Sign-Up Page.](#)

Know! is a program of:

DFAA
Drug Free Action Alliance

*Lifetime
Prevention
Lifetime
Wellness*

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- For safe and appropriate disposal of your medications, you are encouraged to take advantage of community drop boxes or drug take-back days. [Click here](#) to find a drop box near you.
- To properly discard prescription drugs in household trash: remove medicine from the original container, mix with undesirable substance such as coffee grounds or kitty litter and place in a disposable plastic bag or other sealed container. Before placing in the trash, be sure to conceal or remove any personal information on the medicine bottle.

Clearing out your medicine cabinet as part of your springtime cleaning routine is ideal, but it can and should be done on a consistent basis. By limiting the access and availability of medications in your home, you immediately reduce the risk of teen drug abuse. Of course, regular and ongoing conversations with your children on this topic is also key: Remind your son or daughter of your strong disapproval of medicine abuse and make sure he or she is aware that prescription drugs are not a safe alternative to illegal street drugs; as they can be just as dangerous, addictive and damaging to one's developing body and mind.



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