



A H E A L T H Y H O U S E

Storing Your Medicines Safely

Why is it important to store medicines correctly?

When you store your medicines correctly they work well when you need them. If you do not store your medicine in the right place it can be damaged.

What can damage my medicine?

Your medicine can be damaged before the expiration date if you store it in too much sunlight or heat. You should not store medicine where it is very cold or humid.

How can I store medicines correctly?

Here are some tips on how to store medicines:

- Always read the labels carefully. Follow the directions on your bottle. Some medicines, like antibiotics or insulin, need to be refrigerated to work well. Check with your pharmacist if you are not sure of how to store the medicine. Ask where to keep your medicines.
- Keep most medicines in a cool, dry place. Keep them away from sunlight. Remember:
 - ✓ Do not keep medicines in the medicine cabinet in the bathroom. The heat and humidity from the shower can damage the medicines.
 - ✓ Do not keep your medicines in the kitchen. Heat from stoves and ovens can also damage them.



- Always keep medicines in the container they came in. This container has the name of the person taking the medicine. A name on the container may keep others from taking it by accident. No one else should take the medication.
- Take out the cotton ball that comes in some medicine bottles. If you leave the cotton in the bottle it will attract water from the air into the bottle. This may harm the medicine.
- Check the expiration date before you take any medicine. Throw out medicines that are past the expiration date.
- Do not use medicine that has changed color, texture, or smell. It may not work.



- If you travel with your medicines:
 - ✓ Take a list of all your medicines with you. Include the name and the phone number of your pharmacist and doctor. You will need the names if need to refill your prescription or change your medicines.
 - ✓ Bring extra medicine with you. You may return home later than you were thinking.
 - ✓ Put your medicine in a carry-on bag. Keep it with you. Do not put it in the back of your truck. It could get wet or too hot.
 - ✓ Do not to leave your medicine in a hot car. Bring it inside with you.



If a child accidentally takes the wrong medicine or vitamins or too much, call the Poison Control Center right away at 1-800-222-1222.

How can I keep children safe around medicines?

Many children take medicines and vitamins by accident. This can be very dangerous. It is important to make sure that children cannot get to any medicines or vitamins by themselves. Here are some tips for keeping kids safe:

- Ask your pharmacy for containers that a child cannot open. Be sure to put the lid back tightly.
- Make sure children cannot reach the medicine. Put it in a locked cabinet or box. Put it up high where a child cannot get to it.
- Do not call medicine “candy” or “sweet” in front of children. They may try it when adults are not around.

Vocabulary & Definitions

Expiration Date:	The date listed on the bottle that tells you when a medicine will not work anymore. Do not take the medicine after the expiration date.
Humidity:	The amount of water, or moisture, in the air. High humidity may make the air feel damp or heavy. Medicines should not be stored in humid areas.
Medicine Poisoning:	When a person takes the wrong prescription medicine. It can also happen when a person takes too much of a prescription medicine, over-the-counter medicine, or vitamins. This may happen by accident or on purpose.
Pharmacist:	A person who is licensed to prepare and sell prescription medications. They may work in hospitals, clinics, or drug stores. Ask your pharmacist if you are not sure about how to take your medicine.

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Lesson Plan

Materials needed	Handouts	Estimated time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry erase board and dry erase markers • Pencils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Storing Your Medicines Safely” Lesson • “Listening Activity” Handout • Skills Practice Worksheet • Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment • Answer Key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour

NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: To accommodate the literacy levels and educational experiences of the participants, oral and/or group activities may be substituted for reading, writing, skills practice, and survey activities.

Elements	Activities	Notes
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the topic Time: 5 minutes • Conduct the Pre-Assessment Time: 5 minutes • Introduce the new vocabulary Time: 5 minutes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where do you usually store your medicines and vitamins? 2. What are some ways you can tell if a medicine is damaged? 3. What are some ways you can keep children from getting into medicine bottles? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute Pre-Assessment, and ask them to turn it in when it is complete. • Write the vocabulary words on the board, and ask the students to read them aloud. Ask the students if they know what they mean. Provide students with the definitions. Use “Storing Your Medicines Safely” lesson.
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the lesson “Storing Your Medicines Safely” Time: 10 minutes • Identify the vocabulary words in the lesson Time: 5 minutes • Distribute and review the Skills Practice Worksheet with the students and ask them to complete it. Use the Answer Key sheet to verify the correct answers. Time: 25 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor leads guided reading of topic. • Students identify the vocabulary words by circling them in the lesson. • Activity 1: Students have 10 minutes to complete this activity. • Activity 2: Students have 10 minutes to complete this activity. • Activity 3: Students have 5 minutes to complete this activity.
Concept Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Post-Assessment Time: 5 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete Post-Assessment.

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Listening Activity

Listening Activity 3

Purpose: To practice listening comprehension

Time: 5 minutes

1. Tell your students that in this activity they will practice their listening comprehension skills.
2. State that you are going to read five different sentences twice.
3. Let them know that after you finish reading the sentence for the second time, they need to decide if the sentence is True or False.
4. At the end, check the students' answers to make sure they are correct. If some students do not have the right answer, invite other students to participate in the discussion until the information is clear.

True or False?

Statement	True	False
1. You should always read the medicine's label and follow the directions on the bottle.	✓	
2. You should not store your medicines next to the shower.	✓	
3. You should keep your medicines in the container they came in.	✓	
4. It is okay to take a pill if it is only a few weeks past the expiration date.		✓
5. You should not leave your medicines in a hot car.	✓	



Activity 1: Let's Read!

Juan is a three year old boy who lives with his grandmother and parents. His grandmother takes vitamins every day. This morning his grandmother has left her vitamin bottle open on top of the bathroom counter. The vitamins look like candy to Juan. He eats a handful of the vitamins when no one is looking. A few hours later, his stomach hurts badly. He feels like he needs to throw up. His mother sees that Juan is sick and finds the open bottle of vitamins on top of the counter.

1. What should Juan's mother do now?

2. What are some ways that Juan's grandmother could have prevented him from eating the vitamins?

Activity 2: Fill In the Blank

Read the sentences and fill in the blank. Use the lesson to answer this activity.

- Your medicine may go bad when you store it in too much _____ or _____. You should not store medicine where it is very _____ or _____.
- Some medicines, like _____ or insulin, need to be refrigerated to work well.
- Check the _____ before taking any medicine.
- Put medicines in a locked _____ or box. Put it up _____ where a child cannot get to it.

Activity 3: Listening

Listen to your teacher's instructions carefully and mark the correct answer.

Statement	True	False
1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Answer Key

Activity 1: Let's Read!

Juan is a three year old boy who lives with his grandmother and parents. His grandmother takes vitamins every day. This morning his grandmother has left her vitamin bottle open on top of the bathroom counter. The vitamins look like candy to Juan. He eats a handful of the vitamins when no one is looking. A few hours later, his stomach hurts badly. He feels like he needs to throw up. His mother sees that Juan is sick and finds the open bottle of vitamins on top of the counter.

1. What should Juan's mother do now?

She should call the Poison Control Center right away at 1-800-222-1222.

2. What are some ways that Juan's grandmother could have prevented him from eating the vitamins?

She could have put the lid on tightly after she took her vitamins. She could have placed the vitamin bottle out of Juan's reach, such as in a locked cabinet or box, or up high where Juan could not get to it.

Activity 2: Fill In the Blank

Read the sentence and fill in the blank. Use the lesson to answer this activity.

1. Your medicine may go bad when you store it in too much sunlight or heat. You should not store medicine where it is very cold or humid.
2. Some medicines, like antibiotics or insulin, need to be refrigerated to work well.
3. Check the expiration date before taking any medicine.
4. Put medicines in a locked cabinet or box. Put it up high where a child cannot get to it.

Activity 3: Listening

Listen to your teacher's instructions carefully and mark the correct answer.

Statement	True	False
1	✓	
2	✓	
3	✓	
4		✓
5	✓	



Storing Your Medicines Safely
Pre-Assessment

Date: _____

Name: _____

Circle the correct answer.

1. Can you damage medicines by not storing them correctly?

Yes

No

2. Which of the following may be a good way to store medicine?

a. in a refrigerator

b. in the container they came in

c. in a cool, dry place

d. all of the above

3. What information should you check before taking any medicine?

the expiration date

a medical dictionary

4. You can ask your pharmacist questions you have about your medicines.

True

False

5. When you travel, should you bring extra medicine with you?

Yes

No

Total Correct: _____



Storing Your Medicines Safely

Post-Assessment

Date: _____

Name: _____

1. Can you damage medicines by not storing them correctly?

Circle the correct answer.

Yes

No

2. Which of the following may be a good way to store medicine?

- a. in a refrigerator
- b. in the container they came in
- c. in a cool, dry place
- d. all of the above

3. What information should you check before taking any medicine?

the expiration date

a medical dictionary

4. You can ask your pharmacist questions you have about your medicines.

True

False

5. When you travel, should you bring extra medicine with you?

Yes

No

Total Correct: _____

What can you do if you or someone you know has taken medicines or vitamins by accident? (not scored) _____

