OVER-THE-COUNTER
OTC MEDICINE SAFETY
Program Tip Sheet

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicine Safety Program is a free, evidence-based, comprehensive Common Core-ready educational program on the safe use of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, with a rich online hub at *YMIClassroom.com/OTCMedSafety*.

Research shows that students begin to self-medicate around age 11, yet only 54% of tweens know that OTC medicines can be dangerous when misused. If not equipped with the knowledge and training to make safe choices, mistakes can happen. In 2021, America's poison control centers managed 1.17 million cases of exposure for children 19 and younger. In the same year, there were more than 295,000 cases involving medicine errors. This tip sheet suggests best practices for prevention leaders to implement the OTC Medicine Safety program to educate our nation's youth with the knowledge they need to make good choices.

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1 Engage Public and Private School Superintendents, Principals and School Healthcare Staff

Start your efforts with private schools, which may have fewer approval layers to go through.

HOW-TO STEPS

▶ Educate yourself and the coalition on the approval process for substance misuse education in your local schools.
▶ Develop an OTC action plan with specific goals for everyone involved.
▶ Attend meetings and build working relationships with school officials.
▶ Reach homeschool families through local chapters of Home School Associations and home education coalitions.

2 Check Current Substance Prevention Education Curriculum Requirements

If your state Department of Education or local school system has a prevention education curriculum requirement, propose OTC to help fulfill the requirement.

HOW-TO STEPS

▶ Search the state and local Departments of Health and Education for required substance misuse education in schools. Example: *tinyurl.com/OhioDrugUsePrevention*
▶ Review requirements to assess if Common Core-ready curricula require a separate state / local review process before implementation.
▶ Certify the program to meet the substance misuse education requirements for school-aged children.

3 Add to the Statewide Teachers' Online Instructional Resource Library

Getting approval at the state level and sharing the resources through a common library may assist teachers' implementation of the program at their individual schools.
Example: *tinyurl.com/HealthSmartVA*

HOW-TO STEPS

▶ Research approval process to add the OTC Medicine Safety program content to the resource library.
▶ Develop an action plan to get the necessary support from administrators and teachers.
▶ Get approval.
▶ Develop implementation plan.

4 Add OTC Video Tutorials and Print Materials to Individual School Resource Libraries

Many schools have a resource library of approved prevention resources. Ask to add videos and materials from the OTC Medicine Safety program (*CADCA.org/OTC*) to their library.

HOW-TO STEPS

▶ Ask school administrators or teachers if they have a prevention resource library for teachers.
▶ Explain how the OTC Medicine Safety program is evidence-based and aligns with common core curriculum standards.
▶ Learn the approval process for the program to be added and implement the steps.

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5 Engage Youth-Serving Organizations

Promote the OTC Medicine Safety program to afterschool programs, summer camps, scouting associations, 4H Clubs, and other Youth-Serving Organizations.

HOW-TO STEPS

- Identify youth-serving organizations in your area and conduct a community scan of where they are located.
- Study their missions and see where OTC Medicine Safety education aligns with their goals.
- Set up meetings to discuss the benefits of this education and advise them to move forward with the training.
- Contact CADCA to get examples of successful trainings.

6 Implement an OTC Train-the-Trainer Program

Propose an in-depth skill-building session on how to engage youth in a critical conversation about responsible medicine use. Teaching educators to train OTC Medicine Safety builds training capacity across your state.

HOW-TO STEPS

- Get all the OTC training materials from *YMIClassroom.com/OTCMedSafety*.
- Train your presenters. Youth engagement is key and peer-to-peer training is very effective, so be sure to train youth as well as adults to present. Visit *CADCA.org/OTC* to learn how to get youth trained to teach the program.
- Identify local and state prevention or education conferences.
- Submit proposal or abstract to implement training.

7 Present at State, Regional and Local Conferences

Presenting at conferences allows you to educate large numbers of people at one time.

HOW-TO STEPS

- Identify statewide, regional, and local conferences within your state.
- Identify the mission and vision of the conference host agency and assess comparable goals.
- Determine if there are existing or legacy relationships or coordinated efforts with the conference host(s). Establish or expand upon current collaborations with host organizations to include youth medicine safety.
- Establish relationships at the agency or departmental level to assist with sustainability efforts, i.e., Department Heads awareness, involvement, and greenlight to create ongoing collaborative opportunities.

8 Promote Medicine Safety to State Legislators

Some states have approved mandatory substance prevention education for elementary, middle and high school students. Many states are currently considering legislation to implement mandatory substance misuse prevention education.

HOW-TO STEPS

- Educate the local coalition, including the government sector, to help promote and raise awareness of the OTC Medicine Safety program to the general public.
- Provide training to the local coalition on effective policies and policy change processes on both the local and state levels.
- Mobilize the youth to promote local and state policy change to include mandatory prevention training to the legislators at the local and state level.
- Recruit a state representative from the State Board of Education to become a "state champion" of the OTC training within schools.
- Document and evaluate the process for future reference.

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