

Medication Safety Teacher's Lesson Plans

for Preschools, Child Care Programs, and Head Start Programs

Lesson time: 45 minutes

Age level: 4-6 years old

Background for Teachers

Thousands of children are evaluated in emergency rooms every year due to poisoning, most commonly caused by unintentional ingestion of medication.¹ Medication ingestions can have life-threatening consequences, especially in young children.² Medications for children are based on weight, so just one or two pills of certain adult medications can cause death in babies and young children.³ Several factors lead to unintentional medication ingestion, including the improper storage of medication. Young children are developmentally curious and often will put things that they find on the floor or drawers in their mouths. Additionally, children are often unable to tell the difference between medication and candy, leading to ingestion⁴.



Preparation and Materials

- Projector or computer to play online videos
- Printed handout for parents (found under “Extra Resources”)

Pre-Lesson Discussion (10 min)

- Ask students if they know what medication is.
 - *Medication is something people take to prevent, cure, or provide relief from disease.*

¹ Emergency Department Visits Involving the Accidental Ingestion of Opioid Pain Relievers by Children

² Poisoning - World Report on Child Injury Prevention

³ Medication Safety Tips for Families - HealthyChildren.org

⁴ Candy or Medicine: Can Children Tell the Difference?

- Explain to students that they should only take medication when it is given by a parent, doctor, or other trusted adult, like a school nurse.
- Explain to students that medication can look many different ways, and sometimes can be mistaken for candy.

Video Lesson (4 min)

Video should be played for students after the pre-lesson discussion. These videos introduce important concepts about taking and storing medication that are also emphasized in the post-lesson discussion.

[Using and Keeping Medicine Safe](#)



Post-Lesson Discussion (5 min)

- Emphasize to the class that if they find something they don't recognize, they should show it to a teacher or parent immediately.
 - **Do not** put anything unfamiliar in your mouth.
- Explain to the class that consuming too much, or the wrong medication can be dangerous, and it is very important to take medication only under the supervision of a trusted adult.



Demonstrate (10 min)

To demonstrate how easily medication can be mistaken for candy, play this Look-A-Like Quiz with the class. For each round, have the class guess which is the medication, and

which is the candy. Emphasize that because they look so similar, it is important the children show the “candy” to a trusted adult and not put it in their mouth.

[Missouri Poison Center | Look-A-Like Quiz](#)

Extra Resources

For parents: [Medication Safety for Parents](#)

[Candy or Medicine? Keep Kids Safe and Prevent Tragic Accidents](#)

[Medication Safety Tips for Families](#)

[Poison Prevention: One Pill Can Kill](#)