

Nurses Nook - Medicine safety for young children

In our western society we rely a lot on medicine and medications to cure or alleviate the symptoms of illness. While our society reaps the benefit of highly trained medical professionals we sometimes have an abundance of medications that we use daily. Look around your own home and then give some extra thought to keeping kids safe from the misuse of medications. Here are some great suggestions inspired by the website Kids Health:

- Store all medications, both prescription and non-prescription in a locked cabinet out of sight and reach of young children.
- Always keep medication in its original containers (so you know exactly what is in it) and try to keep ongoing track of how many pills or how much liquid is left.
- Never give prescription medication to a person it has not been prescribed for. Health professionals have undergone years of training to perform these functions safely...leave it up to the professionals to diagnose and treat disease.
- Child resistant packaging is child *resistant* but not necessarily childproof...kids are more industrious than you might think, so do not rely completely on this packaging to keep them safe.
- Never prepare your child's medicine in the dark or give them a dose in the dark...you may inadvertently give them the wrong medication or dose.
- Never leave vitamin bottles, aspirin bottles (or other seemingly harmless over-the-counter medicines) around where kids can reach them. Kids like to copy adults and may take these and they can be very dangerous in their small and not completely developed bodies.
- Make sure that when people are visiting purses or backpacks, where medications might be kept, are placed out of sight/reach of young children in the household.

Make sure you dispose of all old, unused, and expired medication safely. You can bring most pills to your local police department for disposal. In addition nurses in each school in the district have medication disposal packets that neutralize old medicines (pills, liquid, and patches) and allow you to dispose of them in a safe, environmentally friendly way. Please call or email your school nurse to obtain a medication disposal packet(s).

Important announcement:

If you or your child has an EpiPen brand autoinjector (not the generic), the manufacturer has extended the expiration dates on some of them. Please see [this link](#) to check if yours is one of those EpiPens. Please make your school nurse aware of the change in dates.