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FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #1 • READ THE LABEL FIRST

WHY THE LABEL MATTERS

The *Drug Facts* label appears on all over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, which can be purchased from stores without a doctor’s prescription, from mouthwash to pain medicines to sunscreen. *Drug Facts* is a standardized label on OTC medicines required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It helps you understand the purpose of the OTC medicines that your family members take, who should take these medicines, and how these medicines should be taken safely. Below is a summary of each *Drug Facts* section.

► **1. ACTIVE INGREDIENTS**

The names of the active ingredients and what they do (e.g., relieve pain, reduce fever, or suppress coughing). Some medicines have more than one active ingredient.

► **2. USES**

The symptoms the medicine treats.

► **3. WARNINGS**

Other medicines that should not be taken with this medicine, side effects the medicine can cause, and other important safety information.

► **4. DIRECTIONS**

The amount of medicine (dose) you should take, how often you should take the medicine, and how much you can take in one day.

Drug Facts									
1 Active ingredients	Purpose Medicine 100 mg cough suppressant Medicine 150 mg nasal decongestant								
2 Uses	Temporarily relieves: ■ coughing due to minor throat and bronchial irritation ■ nasal congestion								
3 Warnings	Do not use if you have ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients. Ask a doctor before use if you have liver or kidney disease. Your doctor should determine if you need a different dose. When using this product ■ you may get drowsy ■ be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery ■ excitability may occur, especially in children Stop use and seek medical help right away if allergic reaction occurs. Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.								
4 Directions	■ Tablet melts in mouth. Can be taken with or without water. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>Dose</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>adults and children 12 years and older</td> <td>2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period</td> </tr> <tr> <td>children 6 years to under 12 years</td> <td>1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period</td> </tr> <tr> <td>children under 6 years of age</td> <td>ask a doctor</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	Dose	adults and children 12 years and older	2 tablets every 12 hours; do not use more than 4 tablets in a 24-hour period	children 6 years to under 12 years	1 tablet every 12 hours; do not use more than 2 tablets in a 24-hour period	children under 6 years of age	ask a doctor
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5 Other information	■ store at 20°–25°C (68°–77°F) ■ keep dry								
6 Inactive ingredients	anhydrous citric acid, aspartame, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, modified food starch, sodium bicarbonate, D&C yellow no. 10								
7 Questions or comments?	Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.								

This is not an actual *Drug Facts* label.

► **5. OTHER INFORMATION**

Other things you need to know, such as how to store the medicine.

► **6. INACTIVE INGREDIENTS**

A list of preservatives, food coloring, flavoring, or other ingredients not intended to treat your symptoms. These can be important if you or someone in your family has an allergy.

► **7. QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?**

For some medicines, a section that provides the phone number of the company if you have questions or comments on the specific medicine.

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ASK FOR HELP
Program the Poison Help Number
Into Your Phone: **1-800-222-1222**

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FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #2 • SAFE DOSING

KNOW THE DOSE

MEASURE CAREFULLY

Accuracy is important when it comes to taking medicine, or when you're giving medicine to family members. When the recommended *dose* is not followed, medicines may not work the way they are meant to or may result in an overdose.

► **Tip #1:**

Take time to read the label and understand what's in the medicine: Follow the directions on your child's medicine closely. Know the active ingredients and that two or more medicines with the same active ingredient may lead to an overdose or cause harm.

► **Tip #2:**

Many children's medicines provide dosing instructions based on weight and age: Look at the Directions section of the *Drug Facts* label to determine the appropriate dose.

► **Tip #3:**

Always use the dosing device that comes with the medicine: Even if the units of measure on the dosing devices that come with different medicines are the same—they are not interchangeable. Dosing devices are customized to the medicine, and use of other devices or household measurement tools (such as teaspoons or kitchen spoons) may cause you to misdose medicine.

► **Tip #4:**

More is not better and could cause harm: Giving your child more than the recommended dose of medicine does not mean he or she is going to get better faster, and it could have adverse effects. So be sure to read and follow the label each time.

► **Tip #5:**

Never give adult medicines to children: Some OTC medicines are not intended for use by children and could cause harm.

► **Tip #6:**

Communication among caregivers is crucial: In 2013, poison centers reported over 70,000 cases involving medication-dosing errors in children 12 and younger, and accidental "double dosing" was the leading cause of errors in this age group. Caregivers need clear instructions on exactly what medicine to give to your child, when your child should get the medicine, and the correct dose.

In 2013, poison centers reported over **70,000** cases involving medication-dosing errors in children 12 and younger.

—SOURCE: American Association of Poison Control Centers



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FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #3 • STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

UP, AWAY, AND OUT OF SIGHT

STORAGE SMARTS

Every year more than 500,000 parents and caregivers call poison control centers because a child got into medicine or was given the wrong dose of medicine. That's almost one call every minute of every day.

► **Tip #1:**

To prevent medicine poisoning, store medicines up, away, and out of sight: When you're storing over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medicines and vitamins and supplements, select a spot that's high and out of the reach of children. Safe storage applies to both adult and children's medicines.

FACT: In 86% of emergency room visits for medicine poisoning, the child gets into medicine belonging to an adult.*

► **Tip #2:**

Be aware of how and where children get into medicines: Kids get into medicines in many places, such as in purses and bags, or on counters or nightstands.

FACT: In 67% of medicine poisoning cases, the medicine was within reach of a child, such as in a purse, left on a counter or dresser, or found on the ground.*

► **Tip #3:**

Products like diaper rash remedies or eyedrops that you might not think of as medicine need to be stored safely, too: Most parents understand the importance of storing medicines up and away, but may not safely store products that they might not think of as medicines.

► **Tip #4:**

When you have visitors, consider the medicines they might be bringing into the home: When you have guests, offer to secure any purses or bags they bring that may contain medicines.

FACT: In 43% of cases, the medicine a child gets into belonged to a relative, such as an aunt, uncle, or grandparent.*

► **Tip #5:**

As soon as you've finished administering medicine, replace the cap tightly: Buy medicines with child-resistant packaging if possible, but remember, child-resistant does not mean childproof. Curious children may be able to get into medicine, so always return medicine to an up-and-away location after every use.

► **Tip #6:**

Clean out your medicine cabinet: To learn about safe ways to dispose of your medicines, visit the [Food and Drug Administration's guidelines](#) for medicine disposal, read the Drug Enforcement Administration's information on the [National Take-Back Initiative](#), or call your poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

More than **60,000** young children end up in emergency rooms every year because they get into medicines while their parent or caregiver is not looking.

—SOURCE: upandaway.org

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*SOURCE: SAFE KIDS Worldwide (www.safekids.org) <http://issuu.com/safekids/docs/2013-medication-safety-report/1?e=4874392/2095890>.

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FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET #4 • OTC MEDICINE MISUSE

MISUSE IS DANGEROUS

YOUNG PEOPLE AND MISUSE

In fifth and sixth grades, children are becoming more responsible for their self-care. It is important to monitor your children and reinforce that they should not be taking over-the-counter (OTC) medicines without adult supervision. In situations where children are required to take medicines regularly, parents should continue to monitor use. Even children who take medicines daily may make errors in dose or dosing frequency.

Create a learning environment that encourages discussion about responsible medicine use and positions healthcare professionals as the go-to resource for questions and concerns.

OTC medicines can be harmful if misused or not used responsibly. This can include:

- Not reading and following the *Drug Facts* label
- Taking more than the labeled dose, or redosing medicine more frequently than directed on the label
- Using more than one medicine with the same active ingredient at the same time, which can lead to an overdose
- Taking medicines for longer than directed on the label
- Taking medicines for reasons or symptoms other than what is directed on the label

When it comes to taking medicine, more doesn't necessarily mean better. If your symptoms don't get better or new symptoms appear, contact a doctor. Take the time to fully understand the medicine that you're taking, read the *Drug Facts* label, and call your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist with questions.

For more information about preventing medicine misuse, visit
consumermedsafety.org/OTC-drug-abuse

Medicine errors and misuse of commonly available over-the-counter medications result in approximately **10,000** emergency room visits for kids under 18 each year.

—SOURCE: *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 2009



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