



Medication Safety

Children

[According to the Center for Disease Control](#), “About 60,000 young children end up in emergency rooms each year because they got into medicines while an adult wasn’t looking.” Instead of hoping this will never happen in your home, make it a guarantee with these few, simple steps!

- **Put medicines up, away and out of children’s sight and reach** – Children are curious and like to put all sorts of things in their mouths. Putting medicines and vitamins in a storage place that a child cannot reach or see will eliminate the opportunity for a child to get into something that could hurt them.
- **Put medicines away every time** – As easy as it may be to think, “I can put this away later” or “Why should I put it away when I need it again in a few hours?”, taking the extra minute to put medicines away can be the difference in ensuring your child’s safety.
- **Make sure the safety cap is locked** – Those pesky caps aren’t just meant to infuriate you ... they are a vital tool in ensuring the safety for your loved ones. Always keep the caps of your medications and vitamins locked and secured when not in use.
- **Teach your children about medicine safety** – To ease the struggle to get your child to take their medicine, it can seem helpful to tell them that it is candy. However, we recommend you avoid this tactic as it can heighten their interest in the medication, leading them to want to seek out and consume more. Instead, try to talk to them about the importance of taking their medications and why you or a trusted adult are the only ones who can provide this medication to them.
- **Tell your guests about medicine safety** – As guests enter your home, it’s important to ask them to keep their medications hidden and out of sight rather than in their purse or coat jacket.
- **Be prepared in case of an emergency** – If you think your child might have gotten into medication or vitamins, **call the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222 or 911 right away for assistance**. If you are not sure, call anyway; these resources are always happy to help you in a case of emergency.

Teens

Having a conversation with your teen(s) about drinking and drug use doesn't have to be as scary or difficult as you may fear. A willingness to have this conversation is a portrayal of the love and concern you have for your teen, showing that you care about their well-being and future.

Try steering the conversation away from consequences and punishments to praise and support for why they may choose not to use. For example, many students decide not to drink alcohol or use drugs due to athletic involvement or working toward future goals like going to college. Centering the conversation on the positives in your teen's life will not only make the conversation easier but will be empowering for their future, as well.

Feel free to explore [this website provided by The Community Alliance for Prevention](#) to help you start this important conversation with your teen today.

Young Adults

With college back in full swing, now is the best time to discuss drug and alcohol use with your young adults. According to the College Prescription Drug Study (CPDS) through Ohio State University, the top five most frequently reported reasons for misuse of medications are below.

Top 5 Reasons for Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs

Pain Medications	Sedatives	Stimulants
Get high (43.1%)	Sleep (52.8%)	Study or improve grades (79.2%)
Relieve pain (40.2%)	Relieve anxiety (48.7%)	See what it was like (22.6%)
See what it was like (34.2%)	Get high (34.4%)	Enhance social situations (21.9%)
Relieve anxiety (31.1%)	See what it was like (26.7%)	Get high (15.0%)
Sleep (26.8%)	Feel better (19.8%)	Like way they feel (12.4%)

College is known to be a time of experimentation and new experiences; however, substances can oftentimes be misused as a means of coping with a variety of issues, as noted above. It's important to proactively address the stressors in a young adult's life and encourage alternative, healthier forms of management to reduce the likelihood of substance misuse. Normalizing and speaking openly about stress and feelings of anxiety help to reduce any associated stigmas and make it more likely for the young adult to seek professional help.

For assistance in how to best help the college-aged loved ones in your life, [visit the National Institute of Drug Abuse's College Aged and Young Adult website](#).

Adults

When asked to describe a common “addict,” it is easy for stereotypes to flood the mind. However, alcohol and drug use disorders affect all populations without bias and, in many cases, our stereotypes are proven wrong. According to the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics, the largest increase in drug overdose deaths from 1999 to 2017 occurred among adults aged 55-64, increasing almost 6-fold during those years (NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality, 2018).

When thinking about how to support our loved ones, neighbors and community, it is important to remember that diseases like addiction are very real issues face by every community, including Naperville. To best support those struggling with an alcohol or substance use disorder, remember to keep an open mind, be supportive and offer resources. For continued support, feel free to utilize the [Connect for Life Program](#) offered by the Naperville Police Department.

Older Adults

It can be hard to think of our senior loved ones struggling with alcohol or substance use, however, it may be more common than you think. According to the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA), alcohol and prescription drug abuse affects up to 17% of adults over the age of 60. Addiction among seniors is often underestimated and under-diagnosed, preventing this population from getting the help they may need.

Potential Reasons for Misuse:	Possible Reasons for Misdiagnosis:	Signs of Possible Substance and/or Alcohol Abuse:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retirement• Death of a family member, spouse, pet or close friend• Loss of income or financial strains• Relocation or placement in a nursing home• Trouble sleeping• Family conflict• Mental or physical health decline (depression, memory loss, major surgeries, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mimic symptoms of other medical diagnosis, such as diabetes, depression or dementia• Thinking the senior’s mental or physical health is declining• Lack of education on effects of seemingly harmless medications prescribed by a physician• Feelings that there is nothing that can be done for a senior due to their age• The “That’s just grandma or grandpa being grandma or grandpa” mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Memory problems• Changes in sleeping habits• Unexplained bruises• Irritability, sadness, depression• Unexplained chronic pain• Changes in eating habits• Wanting to be alone often• Failing to bathe or keep clean• Losing touch with loved ones• Lack of interest in usual activities

If you are concerned about an older adult in your life that may be misusing alcohol or drugs, contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration at 800-662-HELP (4357) or visit www.samhsa.gov/find-help.

Naperville Resource: Unused or expired prescription drugs can pose a significant health hazard to the lives of toddlers, teens, adults and seniors who may inadvertently consume them. Safely and anonymously dispose of unused/expired prescription or over-the-counter medication through the City's [Prescription Drug Drop Box Program](#).