

A Dose of Knowledge: Safely Managing Your Pain

Custom Webinar Suggested Script – Part 2



Slide 1 – Title Slide

Welcome to *A Dose of Knowledge: Safely Managing Your Pain*. [Introduce yourself and your organization]. Part 1 of the series focused on how to safely manage pain by selecting the right medication and taking it safely. This webinar focuses on safely storing and disposing of those medications.



Slide 2 – Participant Pre-Survey

Before we start, please take a few minutes to take this pre-survey. This survey is designed to see what you know, and a follow-up survey will see what you've learned. This will help determine the effectiveness of the workshop resources and are completely anonymous. The pre-survey can be accessed with the link or the QR code on the screen. With most Smartphones you should be able to use your camera to open the QR code. Also, if you can open the survey in a new tab, that will keep you from having to come back to this video.

Note that by completing both surveys, you may qualify to be entered into a drawing for a gift card.



Slide 3

Let's get started with a brief introductory video. [Play the video *Safe Storage of Over-the-Counter Pain Medications* (length 1:11)].



Slide 4 – Storing Your Medications

It's best to keep your medication in its original container so you have the directions, warnings, and other important information on-hand. If you use a daily or weekly pill organizer, or other container to store your medication, hold on to the original packaging. Although it may seem convenient, it is preferable to avoid mixing multiple medications in the same container so that you don't take the wrong one by mistake.

As mentioned in the film, make sure you find a safe place to store all your medications. It's usually best to store them somewhere cool and dry—such as a hall closet or kitchen cabinet. Medications are sensitive, and their ingredients can be damaged by the heat and humidity from the shower and bath if stored in a bathroom cabinet. If you notice that your medications are expired, discolored, crumbling, or look otherwise damaged—don't take them because they may no longer work and can even be unsafe.



Slide 5 – Up and Away and Out of Sight

Many of you probably have young children in your life.

A study found that in over a third of cases where a child got into someone's medication and ended up in the emergency room, that medication belonged to a grandparent. You also have to keep in mind that medications meant for children can still be quite dangerous if they take too much.

Each year, around 50,000 young children are taken to the emergency room because they got into medications that were left within reach. So, if you have little ones to think about, you need to be sure to store all your medications up and away and out of sight. This may mean the top shelf of a kitchen cabinet or hall closet, where it is difficult for children to reach. Make sure you never leave them out on a table, countertop, or sink, or any spot that is easy for children or others to access. You may even want to consider storing them in a lockable storage container. Also be sure to keep any purses, bags, and coats that contain medications out of reach at home and when visiting others. Remember to relock safety caps tightly and put away medications after every use. Keep in mind that most pill organizers don't have child resistant closures and can be easily opened by anyone, so be sure to keep these up and away too.

Storing medications properly not only protects young children from accessing them, but also prevents older children and teens from intentionally abusing them to get high, or worse, to attempt suicide. From 2000 to 2018, more than 1.6 million people between the ages of 10 and 25 attempted suicide by self-poisoning.⁸ Most of these suicide attempts were done with OTC pain medications.⁹

Storing your medications up and away and out of sight is important to do, but because they aren't in plain sight, it can become difficult to keep track of your medications, vitamins, and supplements. Also, the more medications you take, the more confusing it can be to keep them straight. Let's watch this short film that shows how to properly keep track of your medications.



Slide 6

[Play the video *Keeping Track of Your Medications* (length 1:05)].



Slide 7 – Keeping Track of Your Medications

Some people may prefer writing down dosing instructions and timing and keeping it in a familiar place. A tracker tool may be helpful. Others may prefer setting an alarm on their phones or using an app to give them reminders.

Whatever you use to keep track, make sure you share the information with all members of your healthcare team, including your pharmacist, so that everyone is on the same page.



Slide 8 – Disposing of Medications

More than 40% of sold medications are believed to end up unused.¹⁰ One way to help reduce this waste is to talk to your healthcare professional and make sure you aren't getting prescribed more than you actually need. Also stay on top of auto refills, including those on-line, in case you no longer need to take those medications.

The best way to dispose of most types of unused, unwanted, or expired medications (both prescription and over-the-counter) is to drop off the medication at a drug take back site, location, or program promptly. Check with your community and local drug stores for drop off sites. You can go to www.dea.gov or <https://safe.pharmacy/drug-disposal> to find a site near you.



Slide 9 – FDA’s Flush List for Certain Medications

If you can’t get to a take back location promptly, check to see if your medication is on the FDA Flush List. Medications on the list are those 1) with high abuse and/or misuse potential and 2) that can result in death from just one dose if taken inappropriately. Flushing those medications down the toilet is your best option if you cannot get to a drug take back site. However, don’t flush your medication unless it is on the Flush List.



Slide 10 – Throw Away Medications in 3 Easy Steps

If your medication is not on the Flush List, the simplest way to dispose of it is to throw it away in three easy steps: MIX, SEAL, & THROW AWAY:

- STEP 1: MIX - Remove the medication from its original container and mix it with something unappealing like kitty litter, dirt, or coffee grounds. That way if someone finds the medication, they’re less likely to recognize it or want to take it.
- STEP 2: SEAL - Make sure that you seal the medication in a container that prevents leaking — like a plastic sandwich bag or food container with a lid.
- STEP 3: THROW AWAY - Now you can throw it away in the garbage and recycle the original container once you’ve destroyed any personal information.



Slide 11 – What Have We Learned?

Safe medication use not only means choosing the right medication and making sure you take it safely. It also means storing and disposing of that medication so that others don't intentionally and unintentionally get into them.

To learn about this topic, or to watch the first webinar in this series on safe selection and use of over-the-counter pain medications, visit www.agingresearch.org/medication-safety.

Please take a few minutes to take the post-survey on the screen. Remember that your answers are anonymous, and they will help improve these and other education resources on medication safety. You must also complete this post-survey to be entered for a chance to win a gift card.

Thank you for joining today's webinar!



Slide 12 – Thank You!