



Safety at Home

Resources for Students & Families



Facts & Data

Each year, nearly 40,000 Americans die by suicide, homicide, or accidents with firearms.

A similar number of young children end up in emergency rooms each year because they got into medications while an adult wasn't looking, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In Washington state, 39 children died as a result of guns in 2015. This is the equivalent of a child or teen being killed by gunfire every 9 days.

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), 6 out of 10 fentanyl-laced pills contain a potentially lethal dose. Washington state had the biggest increase of fatal overdoses in the nation last year.

School nurses reported a seven-fold increase in opioid overdose medication administered in Washington state schools in 2023, according to OSPI data.

Action Items

- Talk to your children about medication safety and teach them to stay away from guns.
- Keep guns unloaded, locked, and out of reach. Store them in a gun safe or lock box, or use a trigger lock.
- Lock all ammunition in a separate location from the firearm, and hide the keys to all lock boxes.
- Keep medications in a lock box, and make sure the safety caps on medications are locked.
- **If you think your child might have gotten into a medication, call Poison Control at (800) 222-1222 right away, even if you're not completely sure.**
- Talk to the caregivers of your child's friends about gun safety, medication safety, and storage methods.
- Safely dispose of leftover medications, especially opioids.
- Consult with local law enforcement to safely dispose of guns you no longer want. There are strict laws governing the transfer of gun ownership.

Conversation Starters

- It's important for us to talk as a family about your safety. Can you share with me what you know or have been told about gun safety and medication safety?
- Have you been in a situation where you've seen a gun? Remember to never touch a gun if you see it, leave the situation, and tell a trusted adult.
- Are you comfortable asking your friends about the presence of unsecured guns in their homes, or would you like me to talk to their caregivers?
- I have heard some other caregivers talk about a few situations of kids experimenting with drugs. Have your friends been talking about that at all?
- I recently saw a story about kids trying a family member's or friend's prescription drugs. What would you say if someone offered you their prescriptions or asked to have some of ours?

Additional Resources

- Be Smart for Kids: This website offers resources on secure gun storage.
 - Secure Gun Storage: This resource, from Everytown for Gun Safety, provides data on gun deaths, state policies on secure gun storage, and additional reports and fact sheets. (The American Academy of Pediatrics provides related resources.)
 - Store & Use Medicines Safely: The CDC provides information on safe dosages and how to safely store medications.
 - Connecting With Your Teenager to Prevent Drug Use: This article, from the Partnership to End Addiction, offers information for families to help prevent their children from drinking, smoking, or using drugs.
 - Starts With One: This campaign by the Washington State Health Care Authority aims to inform and educate young adults and their families about the dangers of misusing prescription drugs.
 - Safe Medication Return: The Washington State Department of Health provides information on properly disposing medications.
 - Washington Recovery Help Line: A free and confidential resource that provides help 24/7.
- 