

# How Safe Is Your Medicine Cabinet?

## *Why are we concerned about over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription drugs in your house?*

After marijuana and alcohol, prescription and OTC drugs are the most commonly abused substances by Americans ages 14 and older. Many of these drugs are readily available in the family medicine cabinet and can lead to addiction.

## *What can you do to prevent abuse of prescription drugs?*

### **Monitor:**

- Count the number of pills in each of your prescription bottles or pill packets.
- Track the number of times you get refills—getting refills more often than expected could indicate a problem.
- Make sure your friends and relatives are aware of the risks and keep track of their own medicines.

### **Secure:**

- Instead of using a medicine cabinet, store your medicine in a container with a lock, such as a plastic toolbox.
- Remind your friends and relatives, especially older people (who tend to have more prescriptions), to lock up medicines.

### **Dispose:**

- Do not pour drugs down the toilet or the sink.
- Place unused medicines into a plastic bag or container that does not leak. Use a drug disposal kit or add kitty litter, sawdust, or coffee grounds to make the mixture less appealing to pets and children
- **FREE drug disposal kits are available at your local health department.**

*For more information:* Visit [www.vaaware.com/storage](http://www.vaaware.com/storage)



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