

Safe and Healthy Use of Medicine and Other Substances

GRADES 4–5

60 MINUTES

Lesson Overview

This lesson explores different guidelines and resources for safe medication use. Students learn about substance use disorder and treatment. Students deepen their understanding of helpful and harmful uses of medication and other substances through partner collaboration, videos and handouts.

Essential Questions

- When and how can medicine or substances be used safely to promote wellness?
- What can I do to protect myself against the addictive and harmful effects of some substances?
- What is substance use disorder?

Student Learning Goals

- I can describe how to take medicine and other substances safely.
- I can recognize the difference between helpful and harmful ways to use medicine and other substances.
- I can demonstrate an understanding of substance use disorder and resources that help people with this medical condition

Related Standards

Health Standards

4.SUB.4. Demonstrate how to read medicine labels and prescription instructions.

4.SUB.7. Understand that a substance use disorder is a medical condition and that there are resources in communities that can provide support, treatment, and healing.

5.SUB.1. Recognize that substances can be addictive and harmful for adolescents during physical and neurological development.

5.SUB.3. Describe the appropriate use for over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

Transformative SEL Standards

Standard 2: Self-Management and Agency. Use management strategies to build personal and collective agency that lead to achieving goals and aspirations.

Standard 5: Responsible Decision-making and Curiosity. Demonstrate curiosity and analysis of oneself and society in order to make caring choices that impact personal, social, and collective well-being across situations and environments.

Lesson Materials

- Slide deck
- Video: ["Medicines in My Home: The Over-the-Counter Drug Facts Label"](#)
- Prescription medicine label handout
- Video: ["Understanding Habits and Addictions \(for kids!\)"](#)

Lesson Plan

Preparation

Prepare copies of the prescription medicine label handout for student partners to share. Add school resources to slide 16 to share with students if they are worried about themselves or someone else experiencing substance use disorder.

Learning Sequence

Welcome and Lesson Overview | 3 Minutes

1. Welcome students and share the essential questions (Slide 2) and learning goals (Slide 3).

Activate Prior Knowledge and Reflect | 7 Minutes

1. Ask students to turn to a partner and share their knowledge of the lesson's vocabulary words (Slide 4). Listen to student conversations and note existing knowledge and areas for growth or clarification.
2. Define the terms (Slides 5 and 6). Provide clarification based on previous student conversations.

Deepen Content Knowledge and Engage in Learning | 20 Minutes

1. Explain helpful ways medication can be used (Slide 7).
2. Ask students to partner and share ideas from which trusted adults they can learn about safe and healthy medication use and then share with the whole group. Possible responses include doctor, nurse or pharmacist; parent or caregiver; medication labels; medication dosage tools (measuring cup, syringe, etc.); or directions accompanying medication.
3. Explain that a medication label is a trusted source for learning about taking medication. Share images of medication labels on over-the-counter and prescription medications (Slide 8).
4. Watch the video ["Medicines in My Home: The Over-the-Counter Drug Facts Label"](#) (Slide 9).

5. Show the sample prescription medicine label (Slide 10). Remind students that a doctor does not prescribe over-the-counter medicine, so it does not have information specific to the person taking it, like a prescription medicine label. Ask students to talk with a partner and identify information on the label that supports safe medication use.

Apply Learning in Our Context | 25 Minutes

1. Distribute copies of the prescription medicine label handout and review the six questions. Ask partners to write their answers to demonstrate their understanding.
2. Review the answers with the whole group (Slide 11). Allow students to change their answers as needed.
3. Review the information about the harmful use of medication and other substances (Slide 12).
4. Explain how medicine can be a type of substance, and sometimes medicine is important, but it is also important to be careful with medicine. (Slide 13)
5. Review how substance use falls along a continuum or a path where some people don't use any substances, some people use substances because they need them and others have a substance abuse disorder. Explain that there are often steps between beneficial use and substance use disorder where use becomes risky. Also, explain that people can shift between stages during their life. (Slide 14)
6. Let students know they will watch a video discussing habits and addictions. Listen for what the difference is between a habit and an addiction, and think about how an addiction might be like a substance use disorder.
7. Watch the video [“Understanding Habits and Addictions \(for kids!\)”](#) (Slide 15). Have students share what they learned about addiction and how it differs from a habit. Keep track of ideas on a T-chart for students to see.
8. Review key understandings from the video (Slide 16).
9. Review how students can protect themselves (Slide 17). Remind students that they make choices every day, and they can think about how those choices will impact them. They also can seek a trusted adult if they need support making choices.
10. Share school resources for supporting those with addiction and substance use disorder (Slide 18).

Review Key Lesson Takeaways | 5 minutes

1. Review the lesson's essential questions (Slide 19) and learning goals (Slide 20) with students.
2. Ask students to turn to a partner and share one action they can take to be safe and healthy with medication (Slide 21).

Formative Assessment Opportunities

Listen and Look For

1. Listen to student conversations and note existing knowledge and areas for growth. Provide clarification following the conversations.
2. Review student responses on the prescription medication label handout. Provide accurate responses as needed.

Resources

- Educator background knowledge: [“Brain-based Science + Your Curriculum: Helping Our Students Prevent Drug Misuse”](#) webinar.