Everything You Need to Know about Prescription & Over-the-Counter Drugs in 22 Minutes

LESSON PLAN

By Leanne Arnow
B.A. Vassar College
M.A. NYU, Steinhardt School
Teaching Point:
Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs

Subject Area: Health Education

Grade Level: 9-12

Time Frame: One class period

Relevant Standards:
(National Health Education Standards, Grades 9-12)

1.12.9 Analyze the potential severity of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

2.12.2 Analyze how the culture supports and challenges health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.

2.12.3 Analyze how peers influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

2.12.6 Evaluate the impact of technology on personal, family, and community health.

2.12.7 Analyze how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

3.12.5 Access valid and reliable health products and services.

4.12.2 Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

6.12.1 Assess personal health practices and overall health status.

7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

Learning Objectives:
Students will be able to…

- Distinguish between proper and improper use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
- Understand the dangers of mixing different drugs and mixing drugs with alcohol.
- Describe the effects of large doses of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
Learning Objectives continued:

- Explain the connections between prescription drugs and illegal street drugs.
- Recognize the signs of addiction, dependence, abuse and withdrawal.
- Identify resources for getting help with a prescription or over-the-counter drug problem.

Materials:

- *Everything You Need to Know About Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs in 22 Minutes* Teacher’s Resource Book and video
- 2 index cards per student
- chart or board to write on
- removable adhesive or magnet to attach index cards to your chart or board
- 2 copies of the pre/post-test per student (see attached page 8 for template)
- homework assignment page for each student (see attached page 12 for template)
- 2 copies of pre/post assessment rubric (see attached page 11 for template)

Advanced Preparation:

- **Optional:** Give students the pre-test and fill in the pre-assessment rubric before teaching the lesson. Use the data to help you differentiate the lesson.
- Place two index cards on each student’s desk before students arrive.
- Prepare a chart like the one below and post it on the board or wall before class:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Prescription</th>
<th>Over-the-Counter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
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<tr>
<td>DANGEROUS</td>
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Procedure:

Motivation

- Tell students that they will be talking about drugs today. Explain that drugs are chemical substances that affect the function of the mind or body and include illegal street drugs, prescription drugs, and over-the-counter drugs you can buy at a pharmacy.

- Ask students to think of some drugs that are safe and some that are dangerous. Then have each student write the name of a safe drug on one index card and a dangerous drug on the other.

  **Teacher Note:** Students might write drug names like cocaine, Ritalin, or Robitussin, or types of drugs like narcotics, study aids, or cough medicine. If students write a type of drug that can be prescription or over-the-counter, such as *sleeping pills* or *painkillers*, ask them to be more specific.

Activity

- Direct students’ attention to the chart you made. Point out the column headings *street drugs*, *prescription drugs*, and *over-the-counter drugs*, and the rows *safe* and *dangerous*. Have students come up to the board two or three at a time and stick their cards onto the chart in the box they think is appropriate.

- When all cards have been placed on the chart, give students a moment to reflect and briefly discuss their placement choices.

Show the video

- Tell students that they will be watching a video about prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and that they should think about the drugs they categorized as safe or dangerous as they watch.
Discussion

- Invite students to share their thoughts and reactions to the video. Then direct their attention back to the chart and ask them to reflect on where they placed each card. Allow students to ask questions, dispute card placements, and defend their opinions about whether a drug is safe or dangerous. As they do this, use the questions below to review content and guide the class discussion. You can begin filling out the assessment rubric as you listen to students’ comments.

Content Review Questions and Possible Responses

- **How can prescription and over-the-counter drugs be used safely?**
  
  Possible Response: Follow the directions on the label, take the recommended dose, don't mix them with other drugs without asking your doctor, only take your own prescriptions, get prescriptions from a real pharmacy

- **What does it mean to abuse a prescription drug?**
  
  Possible Response: To take a drug that is not prescribed to you, take a higher dose than you should, take it to get high

- **What can happen if a person overdoses on a prescription drug?**
  
  Possible Response: They can stop breathing, go into a coma, have a heart attack, or die

- **How are prescription drugs and street drugs alike?**
  
  Possible Response: They have similar chemical structures and similar effects; abusing prescription drugs can put a person at risk for abusing street drugs

- **Why shouldn’t you buy prescription drugs from an online pharmacy?**
  
  Possible Response: They are unregulated, so there’s no way of knowing what you’re getting

- **What are the dangers of trying some prescription pills at a party?**
  
  Possible Response: You don’t know for sure what you’re getting; you’re more likely to drive drugged; the pills can interact with alcohol and other prescription and over-the-counter drugs you take
Content Review Questions and Possible Responses continued

- Here’s a scenario: A girl has a couple of drinks and then tries some pills at a party. A few minutes later, she’s unconscious on the floor. What could have happened?
  Possible Response: An interaction between the pills she took and medication she was already on multiplied drug effects and caused an accidental overdose; the pills were depressants that magnified the effects of alcohol

- How do dependence and withdrawal fuel a drug addiction?
  Possible Response: When a person tries to quit, dependence makes them unable to function normally and withdrawal makes them feel sick, so they keep taking the drug

- How can prescription and over-the-counter drugs affect a person’s ability to drive?
  Possible Response: By impairing judgment and reflexes, causing overexaggerated reactions or a semi-conscious state, magnifying the effects of alcohol

- What can you do if someone you know is abusing prescription or over-the-counter drugs?
  Possible Response: Say something to the person; tell a trusted adult like a family friend or teacher

Open-Ended Discussion Questions

- Do you think prescription drugs are safer than street drugs? Why or why not?

- What does the stereotypical “drug addict” look like? What does a person with a drug addiction really look like?

- At what point do you think drug use becomes drug abuse?

- Given what we know about the high potential for abuse and serious health risks associated with certain prescription drugs, do you think they should be legal at all?

- What could you tell a family friend about how drug culture has changed since he or she was your age?

- What would you say to a peer who offers you pills at a party?
Wrap up/Assessment

- At the end of the discussion, allow students to move their index cards on the chart if they changed their minds about a drug’s safety. You may want to have students place some cards on the line between the safe and dangerous rows, or you may want to add a row to the bottom of the chart for drugs that are sometimes safe.

- Cover the chart and pass out the post-test. Give students 5 or 10 minutes to complete it.

- As you grade the tests, finish filling out the assessment rubric.

Adaptation for gifted students:

Instead of moving cards on the chart, make a new chart with 3 columns: Always Safe, Sometimes Safe, and Never Safe. Have students re-categorize their cards on the new chart and explain their placement choices. If any cards are placed in the Always Safe row, ask the class if anyone can think of a way in which that drug could be harmful. By the end of the activity, the Always Safe row should be empty because every drug can be dangerous if taken in large doses or mixed with other drugs.

Adaptation for students with special needs:

Instead of having students move cards on the chart, ask them to look again at the cards they categorized as safe. Explain that any drug can be dangerous if it is misused. Challenge students to think of ways in which the drugs they classified as “safe” can be harmful.

Adaptation for students with special needs:

After you pass out the homework page, show students how to read over-the-counter medicine labels by going over the brochure with them. You may want to bring in medicine labels or print drug information from drug websites rather than ask students to find medicine at home.

Homework

- Pass out the homework page and read the directions. Explain that the assignment is to read the label on an over-the-counter drug to find out the health risks that are associated with taking it, the interactions it can have with other prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and other important information. Tell students that they can go to http://www.healthcarepartners.com/brochures/The%20New%20Over-The-Counter%20Medicine%20Label.pdf to download a brochure on understanding over-the-counter medicine labels from the FDA website, or print copies of the brochure ahead of time. Plan to share the information students found during the next class.
Pre/Post Test

Name: _______________________________________________

Directions: Answer each multiple choice question by circling the correct response.

1. It is safe for you to take a prescription drug if
   a. it is monitored by your physician
   b. it is prescribed to a friend who is the same height and weight as you
   c. you got it from an online pharmacy
   d. you have tried it before and nothing bad happened

2. In large doses, prescription painkillers can
   a. cure an illness
   b. cause you to stop breathing
   c. boost your immune system
   d. none of the above

3. Which of these statements about prescription drugs is NOT true?
   a. their chemical structures are similar to illegal drugs
   b. they are safer than street drugs
   c. abusing them can put you at risk for abusing illegal drugs too
   d. it is illegal to possess them if they aren’t prescribed to you

4. Which word describes the need to take a drug just to feel normal?
   a. abuse
   b. addiction
   c. dependence
   d. withdrawal

5. If someone you know is abusing over-the-counter drugs, you should
   a. not worry about it because over-the-counter drugs are safe
   b. keep it a secret so you don’t get them in trouble
   c. turn to an adult for help
   d. make sure the drug isn’t expired
6. Which of the following is an example of abusing a prescription drug?
   a. taking more than the prescribed amount of your own prescription
   b. taking a drug that was prescribed for someone else
   c. using a prescription drug for recreational purposes
   d. all of the above

7. Which kind of drug can cause the effects of alcohol to be dangerously magnified?
   a. over-the-counter painkillers
   b. stimulants
   c. depressants
   d. antibiotics

8. Which of the following statements about over-the-counter drugs is FALSE?
   a. they can cause intoxication
   b. they can cause serious health problems
   c. you cannot get addicted to them
   d. it is possible to die from an overdose

9. Which of the following statements about driving while on prescription or over-the-counter drugs is a MYTH?
   a. prescription drugs like Ritalin make you drive better
   b. you can get arrested for driving under the influence if you have just one or two beers
   c. prescription and over-the-counter drugs can impair your judgment
   d. you can go into a semi-conscious state behind the wheel

10. Which of the following statements about mixing drugs is TRUE?
    a. prescription drugs cannot interact with over-the-counter drugs
    b. the effects of the drugs can be multiplied and cause an accidental overdose
    c. it is safe to take your own prescription drugs with alcohol
    d. no drugs are safe to take together, even if your doctor says they are
Post-Test Answer Key

1. a
2. b
3. b
4. c
5. c
6. d
7. c
8. c
9. a
10. b
Pre/Post Assessment Rubric

Record each student's performance by writing a 1, 2, or 3 in each box, or use your own grading scale.

Key: 1 = not meeting expectations  2 = approaching expectations  3 = meets expectations

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**Homework Assignment:**

**Directions:** Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs can be dangerous when misused. Read the entire label on an OTC drug and answer the questions below. To download the guide to understanding OTC medicine labels from the FDA website, go to: http://www.healthcarepartners.com/brochures/The%20New%20Over-The-Counter%20Medicine%20Label.pdf

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**Note:**
You may need to peel open the label on a drug bottle. If you do not have an OTC drug at home, you can get the label information on the drug’s website.

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**Drug name: ________________________________

1. What are the health risks associated with taking this drug?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

2. Which drugs (including alcohol) should not be mixed with this one?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. Is there anyone who should not take this drug or ask their doctor before taking it?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

4. What other warnings are on the label (activity restrictions, etc.)?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

5. What is the recommended dose for this drug?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
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