**Lesson 6D: Opioid Use Prevention**

**Overview**: Students will learn about the dangers associated with opioid use including fentanyl. The lesson also targets medication safety principles including proper use, storage and disposal of expired or unused medications. Students will apply this functional knowledge in future decision making and refusal skills lessons to avoid taking, touching, or tasting any opioid or unknown substance and tell a trusted adult.

National Health Education Standards:

**Standard 1:** Students comprehend functional health knowledge to enhance health.

**Standard 3:** Students demonstrate health literacy by accessing valid and reliable health information, products, and services to enhance health.

Healthy Behavior Outcome (HBO):

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| Students will avoid taking, touching, or tasting any opioid substance, and they will learn to tell a trusted adult. |

Lesson Objective – Students will be able to:

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| **Objective** | **Assessments** |
| 1. Identify the dangers associated with opioid use. | Bell Ringer question |
| 1. Demonstrate health literacy by interpreting information from pictures of prescription labels and applying the information. | Attachment 6d.1 – Reading Prescription Labels |
| 1. Identify valid information by reviewing the [criteria](https://www.rmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Access-Valid-and-Reliable-Resources_9-12_Step-2.pdf) for a trusted resource. | Attachment 6d.2 – Criteria Check Sheet for Trusted Resources |
| 1. Describe how to dispose of excess medication. | Attachment 6d.2 – Criteria Check Sheet for Trusted Resources |
| 1. Apply the medication safety and substance use prevention principles to make a healthy choice to prevent substance use. | Attachment 6d.1 – Reading Prescription Labels. |

Introduction:

* 187 people die every day in the U.S. from an opioid overdose. In 2020, 5,017 Ohioans died from unintentional overdose; this is greater than the number of people killed in motor vehicle accidents. Opioid use disorder (OUD) – has consequences: heartache for family members witnessing a person’s decline; parental death; increased incarceration; demands on the foster care system; high demands on community resources; and increased health care needs. In this lesson, students will learn the dangers associated with synthetic opioids, specifically fentanyl, so they never take, touch, or taste any unknown substance and know to tell a trusted adult. This lesson will focus on students’ ability to access valid and reliable health resources to stay safe from OUD. Students will implement health literacy skills by reading prescription labels correctly, finding proper disposal sites for old and unused medications, and locating OUD treatment resources.

Teaching Steps:

Activity 1 – Introduction:

* What would you do if you saw an unknown substance on the sidewalk while out in the community?
  + *Possible student responses:* Don’t touch, taste or take it; tell a trusted adult; call the police; etc.
* Why would it be important to tell a trusted adult what you found?
  + *Possible student responses:* Someone, like a young child, could get hurt – even if they just touch it. For example, the synthetic opioid fentanyl is very lethal, and just a few small particles the size of grain of salt could take someone’s life. A pet could also ingest the substance and get hurt.
* What if you found a pill or an open pill bottle on the counter?
  + *Possible answers:* I wouldn’t take, touch, or taste it. It’s not prescribed to me but it also could be dangerous so I should tell a trusted adult.
* Today we are going to learn more about the dangers of opioids; why we should never take, touch, or taste any unknown substance; and why we should tell a trusted adult.
  + Over 75%of the nearly 107,000 drug overdose deaths in 2022 involved an opioid. ([CDC, 2024](https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/about/understanding-the-opioid-overdose-epidemic.html)).
  + From 2019 to 2020, there were [significant changes in opioid-involved death rates](https://libguides.mskcc.org/publichealth/opioids):
    - Opioid-involved death rates increased by 38%.
    - Prescription opioid-involved death rates increased by 17%.
    - Heroin-involved death rates decreased by 7%.
    - Synthetic opioid-involved death rates(excluding methadone) increased by 56%.
* In Ohio, unintentional drug poisoning is the [leading cause of injury death](https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/violence-injury-prevention-program/drug-overdose/).
* Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid analgesic similar to morphine but 50 to 100 times more potent. It is prescribed for pain, but fentanyl is also made illegally. Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths. Illegal fentanyl is being mixed with other drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and MDMA. This is especially dangerous because people are often unaware that fentanyl has been added ([National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2021](https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/fentanyl#:~:text=The%20high%20potency%20of%20fentanyl,are%20taking%2C%20resulting%20in%20overdose.)).
* Here is a video to illustrate how fentanyl has made its way into the drug supply:
  + <https://youtu.be/zu_WtBrmScs>
* The following are signs of an opioid overdose:
  + Loss of consciousness, limp body.
  + Slowed breathing, choking.
  + Small, “pinpoint” pupils
  + Pale, blue, or cold skin
  + Slowed heart rate
  + **If you see someone exhibiting these symptoms, call 911 immediately.**
* The opioid epidemic started with prescription drugs, specifically painkillers. In 2012, the total number of prescriptions dispensed was more than 255 million with a dispensing rate of 81.3 prescriptions per 100 persons. The overall national opioid dispensing rate declined from 2012 to 2020, and in 2020, the dispensing rate had fallen to the lowest in the 15 years, 43.3 prescriptions per 100 persons (more than 142 million opioid prescriptions) ([CDC, 2024](https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/data-research/facts-stats/us-dispensing-rate-maps.html)).
* Misuse of prescription medication is another dangerous health concerns. Some believe that if a drug can be prescribed, it is safe; however, misuse of these drugs is just as dangerous as taking illicit or street drugs. The following principles apply to prescription drug safety:
  + Use medications as prescribed or directed. A trusted adult can help.
  + Never share or let anyone else take your medicine. Never take anyone else’s medication.
  + Properly store and dispose of excess medications.
  + Store medication should be in a locked cabinet out of reach of children.
* Disposal of excess medication:
  + Use a drug take-back program (See [Drug Enforcement Administration Take Back Day](https://www.dea.gov/takebackday))
  + If a take-back option is not available, you have two options based on the drug:
  + Flushing medication (Check label first or consult [list](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-fdas-flush-list-certain-medicines#FlushList))
  + Trash at home (see [FDA “non-flush” list](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-dispose-non-flush-list-medicine-trash))
  + Mix with an unpalatable substance (such as dirt, litter, coffee grounds)
  + Place in a sealed bag
  + Throw in the trash
  + Scratch out all personal information on the label.
  + Don’t take, touch, or taste if the substance is unhealthy, unsafe or unknown.
* We want to do our part to continue healthy trends and learn how to take and dispose of medications properly. Let’s first focus on reading and interpreting medication labels. Refer to Attachment 6d.1 – Reading Medication Labels.
  + Review the components of a prescription label as a class. Ask the question and have students share responses. Students will then apply the information they learned with the two examples of prescription labels on the worksheet. Students can work individually or with a partner to complete the worksheet. Review the answers as a class.
* Answers to Attachment 6d.1:
  + Label 1 – J. Smith: 1) 10 Days; 2) 056720560077; 3) 503-555-9124
  + Label 2 – C. Mather: 1) Up to 3 times; 2) May impair the ability to drive; use care until familiar with effects; do not take other medications without checking with your doctor; 3) 07/09/12
  + In Lesson 9, we will learn how to recognize, reach out, and access resources for substance use disorder.
  + Students will then find SUD resources on prevention and treatment of SUD. (Share link of county board of mental health or recovery board). This could include a treatment center or hotline to support a person who may be struggling with OUD. Give students time to work on this portion of the worksheet, and then have the students share resources they found.

Closing

* Exit Ticket:Give students a sticky note and have them share one piece of information they learned today that will help them to stay safe. Have them post the note in a classroom location.

Lesson Resources:

* [Understanding the Opioid Overdose Epidemic](https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/about/understanding-the-opioid-overdose-epidemic.html) (CDC)
* [Fentanyl Facts](https://www.cdc.gov/stop-overdose/caring/fentanyl-facts.html) (CDC)
* [Drug disposal site locator](https://recovertogether.withgoogle.com/prevention/)
* [Stop Overdose](https://www.cdc.gov/stop-overdose/about/index.html)
* [Video: *Protect Yourself from the Dangers of Fentanyl*](https://youtu.be/zu_WtBrmScs)
* [Curriculum: Health and Opioid Prevention Education (HOPE)](https://health-education-human-services.wright.edu/kinesiology-and-health/hope-curriculum)
* [Medication Safety Curriculum](https://generationrx.org/)

Attachment 6d.1: Reading Prescription Labels

Step 1: This information guides patients with proper prescription use. Figure 1 provides a diagram that identifies the information on the prescription label.

Close-up of a prescription

Description automatically generated

1. How many tablets will J. Smith take?
2. How many times each day will J. Smith take the medication?
3. Could John Smith’s prescription be refilled?
4. What is the phone number of the pharmacy?

Scenario 1. Now that you have learned about the components of a prescription label, practice applying this information with the example prescription labels and questions below.

A prescription for a prescription

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1. Who is the only person that should take this medicine
2. How many times each day will C. Mather take the medication?
3. Could John Smith’s prescription be refilled?
4. What is the expiration date for the medication?

**Additional questions:**

1. What is the proper way to dispose of unused or old medications? Include the website where you found this information.
2. List the two medication disposal sites you found; include the websites:
3. What should you do if you see pills or substances like the ones in the picture?



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| 1. Rate your level of confidence to read a medication label for prescription or over-the-counter medication. | | | |
| Very confident | Confident | Somewhat confident | Not confident |