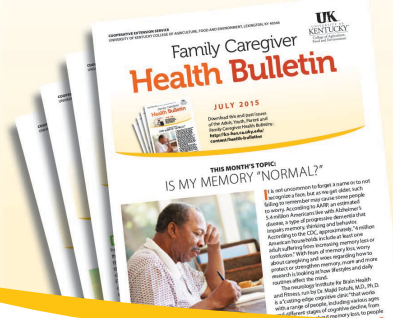


Family Caregiver Health Bulletin



OCTOBER 2015

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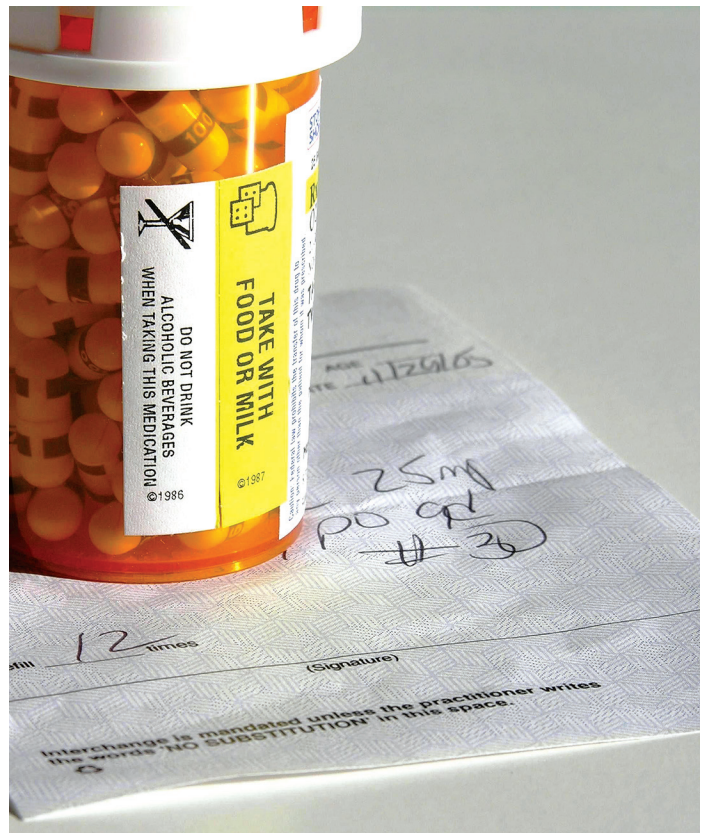
THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: ACCIDENTAL DEALERS

An “accidental dealer” is anyone who unknowingly provides access to over-the-counter or prescription medication to someone who enters their home. People who might want such medications can include:

- Children
- Grandchildren
- Friends of children
- Family members
- Friends
- Neighbors

Research demonstrates that the majority of teens who experiment with prescription drugs for the first time obtain them from a family member or a friend's family member without them knowing it.

Because some medications have psychoactive (mind-altering) properties, they are stolen for money and/or abused. It is considered abuse when medications are taken by someone other than for whom a doctor prescribed or when the prescription



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The average age of first-time drug use in southern and eastern Kentucky is 11 years. — Ashley Shepherd, Operation Unite (2015)

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is taken for reasons or in ways that a doctor did not prescribe. After marijuana and alcohol, prescription and over-the-counter drugs are the most commonly abused substances by teens and adults older than 14 years. Furthermore, drug overdose is the second leading cause of accidental death in the United States, second only to vehicular accidents.

Kids using drugs, in particular, may not think that prescription drugs are as dangerous as street drugs because they come from doctors and laboratories. But even prescription drugs can be highly addictive, cause permanent brain damage, impair motor functioning and learning, and increase the risk for respiratory failure, seizures, heart attack and death.

Kentucky leads the nation in the abuse of prescription drugs, with rates of abuse three times higher than the national average.

— Ashley Shepherd,
Operation Unite (2015)

What you can do:

- Talk to kids about the dangers of drugs
- Talk about medication access and safety with children, children's friends, parents and other relatives
- Store all prescription and over-the-counter medications in a locked medicine cabinet or a lockbox
- Keep a monthly written inventory of all medications you have in your possession, and note any changes
- If you suspect a problem, intervene right away. Operation UNITE (Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education) can provide guidance and resources. (866) 90-UNITE or (866) 908-6483.

- Become involved with your local UNITE coalition to get involved in the fight against drug abuse.
www.operationunite.org

REFERENCES:

- NIH. (2014). DrugFacts: Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications Retrieved August 18, 2015 from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/prescription-over-counter-medications>
- Shepherd, A. (2015). Accidental Dealer. Operation Unite. Kentucky Coalition Coordinator. Information adapted from "Accidental Dealer: Who Are You Dealing To" presentation. June 15, 2015.



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Health Bulletin

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