

## Action 1

### Three Steps to Safeguard Your Home

**Make sure the teens in your life don't have access to your medicine. Find out how to monitor, secure and properly dispose of unused and expired prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicine in your home.**

#### **STEP 1: MONITOR**

How aware are you of the quantities that are currently in your home?

- Start by taking note of how many pills are in each of your prescription bottles or pill packets and keep track of your refills.
- If your teen has been prescribed a medicine, be sure you control the medicine, and monitor dosages and refills.
- Make sure your friends and relatives — especially grandparents — are also aware of the risks. Encourage them to regularly monitor their own medicines.

#### **STEP 2: SECURE**

- Take prescription medicine out of the medicine cabinet and secure them in a place only you know about.
- If possible, keep all medicines, both prescription and over-the-counter, in a safe place, such as a locked cabinet your teen cannot access.
- Tell relatives, especially grandparents, to lock up their medicine or keep them in a safe place.

#### **STEP 3: DISPOSE**

- Take an inventory of all of the medicine in your home. Start by discarding expired or unused Rx and OTC medicine when your teens are not home.
- Teenagers will retrieve discarded prescription medicine from the trash. To help prevent this from happening, mix the medicine with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter.
- Do not flush medicine down the toilet or sink drain.
- To help prevent unauthorized refills and protect your family's privacy, remove any personal, identifiable information from prescription bottles or pill packages before you throw them away.
- Learn more about safeguarding and disposing of medicine at [MedicineAbuseProject.org](http://MedicineAbuseProject.org) and find a medicine take-back location near you.