**OTC vs Rx Medication (Intro to Drug Education)**

**Objectives**

\*Define over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and prescription medicines Rx

\*Understand the how to responsibly use medicine

**Materials**

\*Chart paper with a Venn diagram drawn on it

\*Markers

**Time**: One 30 minute class period

**Key Vocabulary**

* **Over-the counter (OTC) medicine:** Medicine that is bought in a pharmacy, drug store, or supermarket and is obtained without need for a doctor’s prescription.
* **Prescription (Rx) medicine:** Medicine that is specially ordered for you by a doctor or other qualified healthcare practitioner, available only from a pharmacist.
* Both OTC and Rx medicines can cause real harm if label instructions are not read and followed when they are administered.

**Lesson Steps**

1. Begin a class discussion by asking students to brainstorm a list of symptoms they have had when they were not feeling well. (answers may include: upset stomach, headache, fever, cough, etc.)
2. Then invite students to share a personal story that describes what happens when they get sick. (Answers may include: go to the doctor, take medicine, rest, drink water or juice, stay home from school, etc.)
3. Discuss how there are many different ways that doctors treat sickness, one of which is recommending medicine. Medicines fall into two main categories: OTC or prescription. Ask students to brainstorm different medicines they are familiar with. As a class, decide whether each medication belongs in the OTC or Rx category. Make sure the list includes OTC medicines that students may not think of as medicines, such as cough drops and eye drops.
4. Describe how every medicine is unique and has a certain set of characteristics that enable it to treat specific symptoms, refer to drug facts poster. Have students recall a time when they had to take medicine. Ask students:

Q: What measuring tools or devises has your parent or trusted adult used to give you liquid medicine?

Q: Has anyone ever taken medicine without the permission of a trusted adult?

Q: Have you ever read the Drug Facts label on an OTC medicine container?

1. Explain how every medicine comes with dosing directions and that dosing instruction on OTC medicine appear on the Drug Facts label. Reinforce the importance of always communicating with a trusted adult before taking any medicine. The purpose of the instructions on the bottle is to help make sure that the medicine is taken correctly. When we do not follow instructions, the medicine may not work the way it is meant to, it can make you feel worse, or it can hurt you. You may have allergic reactions or experience side effects like dizziness or nausea.
2. Organize the class into groups of five or six. Hand out a piece of chart paper to each team. Instruct them to title one circle OTC and on Rx.
3. Write the follow list of characteristics on the board or project them on your SMART Board:
4. Children should use only with the permission of a parent or trusted adult.
5. Should only be used by the person for whom it was ordered.
6. Prescribed by a doctor or nurse practitioner for one person.
7. The medicine label, including directions, must be read and followed carefully before use.
8. Can buy without a doctor’s prescription.
9. Not following the directions on the label can make you sicker.
10. A healthcare professional or local poison center can answer questions about this medicine.
11. Will have directions on how to use the medicine safely.

**Conclusion**

Have students share their completed diagrams with other teams or discuss answers as a class and invite any follow-up questions about the lesson.