

Safe OTC

A Community Education Campaign in Powell, WY

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Purpose: Safe OTC utilizes point-of-decision advertising techniques to increase community understanding about safe and effective over-the-counter (OTC) medication use.



Results:

Safe OTC Education Campaign includes:

- Series of newspaper ads for the Powell Tribune
 - Each ad addresses one commonly used OTC med
 - Each ad includes the statement “cut me out and tape me to your medicine cabinet!”
 - Educational flyers
 - Flyers should be placed in the OTC medication aisle at the local grocery store and pharmacy
- Rx Workgroup was presented with:
- Completed campaign materials
 - Report including summary of literature review
 - Implementation plan
 - Potential future directions for continuing community education and targeting seniors

Background:

About Powell, WY:

- Population: 6,314
- 16.6% of population is over age 65 compared to 12.4% of WY

About OTC meds:

- The average number of OTC meds taken daily by an individual in the U.S. is about 1.8
- Seniors account for about 1/2 of total OTC meds purchased in the U.S
- 27.3% of rural elderly use four or more OTC meds daily compared to 14% of urban elderly

Methods:

- Patient interactions in the clinic and conversations with Rx workgroup (part of Park County Public Health) revealed that many citizens of Powell are at risk of serious health consequences from taking OTC meds incorrectly and are unsure which OTC meds are best for their individual symptoms and health history
- Literature review revealed point-of-decision advertising techniques would be most practical and effective
- Safe OTC was designed to be implemented by the Rx workgroup utilizing pre-existing relationships within the community

Discussion:

- While developing Safe OTC, it was surprising to discover how little public education material already exists about specific OTC med use – there is a need for accessible and understandable information!
- A challenge for Safe OTC - designing educational material at a 5th grade reading level
- Partnering with Rx workgroup is the major success factor for the Safe OTC campaign due to their:
 - Invested community members
 - Previous experience implementing educational campaigns
 - Connections with the local pharmacy and newspaper
 - Grant funding to cover costs associated with program execution

Which over-the-counter (OTC) Medication is right for you?

Heartburn?

| Antacids | Acid reducers | Proton Pump Inhibitors |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brand names: Alka-Seltzer, Pepto-Bismol, Vioxx, Mylanta, Tums | Brand names: Pepcid AC, Zantac, Axid, Tagamet | Brand names: Prevacid, Prilosec, OTC, Nexium |
| How it works: Neutralizes the acid in your stomach | How it works: Blocks the signal that tells the stomach cells to make acid | How it works: Stops the pump that puts acid into the stomach |
| Tips: Works quickly! A good first choice. | Tips: Takes up to 1 hour to work and lasts for around 12 hours | Tips: Good for people who get heartburn 2 or more times a week. Takes longer to work but effects last for 24 hours or more |
| Who should check with a doctor before using it: People with kidney disease | Who should check with a doctor before using it: People with kidney disease | Who should check with a doctor before using it: Post-menopausal women (can increase your risk of bone weakness), people who have a history of Quantitative Follicle Infection, the elderly and immunocompromised |

Upset Stomach?

| Pepto-bismol or Kaopectate | Emetrol (dextrose/fructose/phosphoric acid) | Imodium (Loperamide) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What symptoms does it treat? Issues, Vomiting, Diarrhea | What symptoms does it treat? Issues, Vomiting | What symptoms does it treat? Diarrhea |
| Who should avoid these medications? People who are allergic to aspirin, children under 12, teenagers with the flu or chicken pox, women who are breast feeding | Who should avoid these medications? People who are pregnant or breast feeding. Diabetics should not take Emetrol without consulting a doctor first. People with hereditary fructose intolerance should not take Emetrol. | Who should avoid these medications? Children under 2 years old, people who have fever or black or bloody stools |

Drugs can pass from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby. A safe amount of medicine for mom may be too much for the unborn baby. If you're pregnant, always talk with your doctor before taking any drugs, Rx or OTC.

If you have black or bloody stools – see a doctor.

Example flyer

NSAIDS

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

HELLO my name is

Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin)
Naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn)
COX-2 Inhibitor (Celebrex)
Aspirin

When can I use them?
If you have muscle pain, period cramps, some types of joint pain, headache, fever, or other pains.

What are the possible side effects?
Bleeding in the GI system (for example - stomach), diarrhea, nausea, kidney problems, and swelling

How much do I take?
Since there are so many different types of NSAIDs, make sure you read the instructions on the back of the bottle carefully.

REMEMBER: Use the smallest effective dose for the least amount of time!

Special note on Aspirin:
If your doctor recommended that you take aspirin every day to protect your heart, be aware that you already have NSAIDs in your body. Taking more may increase your chances of having GI side effects and decrease the heart protecting effects.

NSAIDs are usually NOT RECOMMENDED if you are in your third trimester of pregnancy.

Prevent accidental overdose!
Before taking NSAIDs, make sure your other medications (prescription and over-the-counter) don't also contain NSAIDs so you don't accidentally exceed the recommended amount.

*** Cut me out and tape me to your medicine cabinet ***

Laxatives. An over-the-counter option to help unclog the pipes.

Want to avoid medication? Increasing fiber in your diet (fruit, vegetables, bran), drinking lots of water, and exercising are proven to help with constipation.

| Type of Laxative | How it Works | Examples | Tips |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bulk former | Absorbs water to make stool more bulky but softer and encourage contraction of the bowels | Citrucel, Metamucil, Benefiber | Can be used daily but be sure to take with lots of water! Considered the easiest on your body. |
| Osmotic | Draws water into the gut to help stool pass more easily | Milk of Magnesia, Miralax, Lactulose | Can cause diarrhea and dehydration. |
| Stool Softeners | Add moisture to stool to promote strain free bowel movements | Colace, Surfak | Can only be used for occasional constipation (not every day) or may cause electrolyte imbalances |
| Stimulant | Triggers contractions of the bowel | Ducolax, Senokot | Can cause cramping, diarrhea and belching |
| Lubricant | Helps stool slide along the bowel | Glycerin suppositories | Suppositories work by being placed in the rectum. |

Laxatives can interact with blood thinners, some antibiotics, and certain heart and bone medications. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of these.

Check with a doctor before giving laxatives to children.

Bulk former and stool softener laxatives are usually safe in pregnancy. Stimulant laxatives may be harmful.

*** Cut me out and tape me to your medicine cabinet! ***

Example newspaper ads



View of Heart Mountain from Powell