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CHPA Educational Foundation Survey Provides Insight into What Consumers Need to Know About Over-the-Counter Medicines

Education about in-home medicine disposal a growing priority for foundation

Washington, D.C. – [The Consumer Healthcare Products Association \(CHPA\) Educational Foundation](#) today released a national survey, which was conducted to identify consumers' knowledge gaps around the appropriate use, storage, and disposal of oral over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and to inform future foundation programs and initiatives. The survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of the CHPA Educational Foundation in February 2015 among 2,002 U.S. adults 18 and older who have used or purchased oral OTC medicines in the last six months.

While the majority of consumers are using OTC medicines safely and appropriately, three in five consumers (62 percent) have never sought information about how to properly dispose of unwanted or expired OTC medicines despite the fact that nearly nine in 10 adults (89 percent) say the way in which someone disposes OTC medicines is important. About half of consumers (49 percent) indicated that they desire to know more about proper disposal of their OTC medicines.

"This year, the CHPA Educational Foundation made consumer education about safe medicine disposal one of our top priorities, and these survey findings affirm that this is an area where we should continue to grow our programming in order to reach more consumers," said Emily Skor, executive director of the CHPA Educational Foundation.

In March, the CHPA Educational Foundation relaunched its online home – [KnowYourOTCs.org](#) – and populated the website with new resources on OTC medicine disposal including [instructions](#) for a simple, FDA-recommended "1, 2, 3 step" method for in-home disposal. Throughout the year, the foundation has distributed this information to consumers through various mediums including an [infographic](#), [video](#), and [poster](#). The graphics are distributed widely through the foundation's social media channels and by the CHPA Educational Foundation's parent blogger ambassadors. The poster was distributed nationally through a partnership with the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) and is available for additional groups and consumers to order or download from [KnowYourOTCs.org](#).

AAPCC Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Stephen T. Kaminski, J.D., said mobilizing consumers to practice safe medicine disposal and storage is key to preventing accidental medicine ingestions.

"It's too easy for unused or expired medications to get into the hands of children, addicts, and others for whom they can be dangerous, and we will continue to support consumer education efforts for proper storage and disposal," Kaminski said. "Across the country, we support the 55 poison centers in their efforts to prevent and treat accidental poison exposures, and consumers can access our Poison Help

line at 1-800-222-1222 for confidential medical advice. We also encourage parents to talk to their children about medication safety, and visit Scholastic.com/otcliteracy for resources on how to keep children safe.”

Additional key insights from the survey include the following:

- The vast majority of adults with children under 18 in the household and give or purchase OTCs for their child(ren) are diligent when giving OTC medicine to a child.
 - 98 percent look closely at the age restrictions on the OTC medicines they give the child(ren) in their household
 - 96 percent check the label to make sure the medicine is appropriate for the child(ren)’s age in their household
- Over six in 10 consumers (62 percent) say they would consult with a healthcare professional if they were going to use an OTC medicine other than how it is directed on the label.
- The majority of adults (84 percent) know where to find information on safe OTC medicine storage, yet some still store their medicines where children can reach them. One in three adults with children in the home (36 percent) reported that the location where OTC medicines are stored in their home could be accessible to a child.
- 84 percent of consumers say they check the expiration date at least sometimes when using an OTC medicine for themselves, and 93 percent of those with children in the household check at least sometimes for their child.
- Seven in 10 consumers (70 percent) express they could be better at properly disposing of their OTC medications.

Skor said the additional findings on use and safe medicine storage will provide guidance for the foundations’ 2016 priorities and programming for KnowYourOTCs.org and the foundation’s [Up and Away and Out of Sight](#) campaign, run in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its [PROTECT](#) initiative.

An overview of the survey key findings can be found [here](#).

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The CHPA Educational Foundation’s mission is to be the trusted source of information on the responsible use of consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and dietary supplements. Through public/private partnerships, national educational campaigns, and media efforts, the foundation educates consumers on how to safely use, store, and dispose of OTC medicines and dietary supplements. Information and materials represent the latest medical and scientific thinking and research and address specific areas where we know consumers need guidance and support.

All resources for consumers are available through KnowYourOTCs.org, the online home of the CHPA Educational Foundation.

chpa.org

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA) from February 3 - 9, 2015, among 2,002 U.S. adults age 18+ who have used or purchased oral OTC medicines in the last six months. For complete survey method, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact Jenni Roberson at 202.429.9260.