“Store It Safe”
Anticipatory Guidance for 12 – 21 Year Olds
provided by the Partnership for the Safety of Children Around Firearms

Emotional triggers shouldn’t be lethal

What can I do to reverse this trend of irreversible actions?

1. **Screen for suicide at every adolescent encounter using a validated screening tool**
   - Include suicide prevention information in your anticipatory guidance
   - Some recommended tools to screen for adolescent mental health concerns are:
     - Patient Health Questionnaire for Adolescents (PHQ-A), a self-administered instrument that assesses anxiety, eating, mood, and substance use disorders among adolescent primary care patients
     - Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) Toolkit is a free resource for medical settings to help identify youth 10-21 years of age at risk for suicide

2. **Advise all families to use a barrier to store potentially lethal means safely:**
   - **Guns** – Every 3 hours a teenager in the US takes his or her life using a gun
   - **Medications** – Both prescription and over-the-counter medications can result in overdose deaths
   - **Alcohol** – Alcohol causes more than 4,300 deaths among US teens each year

3. **Provide a lock box for these materials if possible**

4. **Provide resources and referrals for families who need help**
   - Connect with community partners and local resources for suicide prevention
   - If you have further questions, refer families to resources:
     - Suicide Prevention Resource Center - https://www.sprc.org/
     - Suicide Prevention Lifeline - https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
     - Suicide Prevention Lifeline - Call 1-800-273-8255
     - Crisis Text Line - Text HOME to 741741

5. If you have immediate concerns send adolescents to your local emergency department.

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Almost 50% of US homes have a firearm

1/3 of high school students in a large metropolitan area have reported they have a gun or easy access to a gun

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 10-19 year olds

Suicide in teens can be triggered by a seemingly small stressor and happen quickly

At any given time 1 in 5 teens are depressed

**Firearms** are the leading cause of suicide completion

Barriers to lethal means are effective in reducing suicides
Store It Safe is a unique partnership of healthcare providers, firearm experts, and community organizations established to keep children safe from unintentional gun deaths and teens safe from suicide by firearms. Young children are curious and will touch anything, while teens are still learning to control impulses. Our goal is to inform families of risks so they can keep their children safe.

Suggestions for Productive Dialogue

- Safe firearm storage should be incorporated into the normal safety discussion of a well child visit – just as you would talk about safe storage of medications, harmful chemicals, etc.
- Between 30-40% of Ohio homes have firearms, so assume that your patient’s family has a firearm in the home.

Ask about firearm storage in a non-judgmental way

- Instead of asking “Do you have a gun in the home?” ask “If there is a gun in the home, is it kept locked and away from children?”
- If yes, that is great. Families should still be encouraged to talk to their children about gun safety in case they encounter an unsecured gun in another setting.
- If no, there is an opportunity for education about Store It Safe.
- If the response is “we don’t own a gun” then the healthcare provider should still encourage the parents talk to the child about firearm safety, because chances are that the child is going into another home where there is a firearm.

Questions?

- Resources from Ohio AAP for families can be found at: http://ohioaap.org/firearmsafety
- The Ohio AAP is one partner, but suicide prevention will be more effective if physicians, communities, organizations, and families work together; find a local suicide prevention coalition at: http://www.ohiospf.org/coalitions/