



Store It Safe: Suicide Prevention

Family Discussion Guide provided by the
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Suicide Facts:



Unsupervised youth
firearm access **triples** the
risk of death by suicide



50% of survivors
made an attempt within
20 minutes of their decision to
attempt suicide



Of youth who died by
suicide, **82%** used a firearm
from their home

Emotional Triggers Should Not Be Lethal

What can you do to keep your youth safe?

- EVERY youth is at risk
- The adolescent brain is still developing, which can lead to emotional situations that override their still-developing impulse control
- Knowing risks for injury and using a barrier can help keep youth safe
- Youth can engage in risky behaviors and react to seemingly small stressors
- Even with no history of depression, youth sometimes make impulsive decisions with deadly results. **Education alone is not enough.**

Barriers are Effective

Risks

Firearms:

- 90% of suicide attempts with a firearm are fatal
- Nearly 2/3 of all US firearm deaths are due to suicide
- The rate of firearm suicide by teens is up 61% over the past 10 years
- Youth should not know the combination or location of keys to firearm safe



Barrier as Prevention

- Even if experienced with firearms, youth should only have supervised access to them
- Keep any firearms that are not under your direct control locked away
- Ammunition should also be locked when not in use
- Consider temporarily removing firearms from the home if someone is suicidal

Medications:

- Youth often take medications in suicide attempts
- Both prescription and over-the-counter medications can result in overdose deaths
- **Tylenol**, when taken over suggested dosage, can cause life-threatening injuries or death, even if appearing symptom free for the first 24 hours



- Always keep prescription and over-the-counter medications locked away and out of the reach of children and youth
- Have a family conversation about the dangers of misusing medications
- Never share medications with family members
- Dispose of prescription medications after the period they are prescribed

Alcohol:

- Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the US and is readily accessible in homes
- Alcohol causes more than 4,300 deaths among US teens each year



- Like medications, alcohol should be locked away and not accessible to youth
- Talk to your youth about alcohol and potential dangers. Keep the lines of communication open and let your youth know that they will not be in trouble if they come to you with concerns.



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My child...

- ...Is an honor roll student
- ...Is in the school band
- ...Doesn't make friends easily
- ...Is a talented athlete
- ...Is busy all the time
- ...Has a lot of friends
- ...Runs with the popular crowd
- ...Spends a lot of time alone
- ...Has a small, close group of friends
- ...Is leader of a school club
- ...Struggles with grades

Should I talk to my child about mental health and suicide?

YES!

Every parent should be having honest and open discussions with their teen no matter the circumstances. Depression and suicide may be hard to recognize, which is why an open dialogue is key.

Have frequent conversations with your teen on this topic even if your teen seems disinterested. Incorporating them into your normal routine, such as during family dinners, is an easy way to do so.

You can make a difference.

Suicide Warning Signs:

- Depression and other mental concerns, or a substance use disorder
- Talking about feeling hopeless or worthless
- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- Withdrawing or isolating from friends, peers and family
- Family history of suicide, mental illness, or depression
- Knowing someone with suicidal behavior (for example, a family member, friend or celebrity)
- Severe stress or anxiety
- Sudden changes in behavior such as talking less or becoming disengaged
- Bullying



Whether your child has mental health concerns or not, youth should not have unsupervised access to any lethal means. This includes firearms, prescription medication, and over-the-counter medicine. Keep these items locked and ensure youth do NOT know the location of the keys.



Resources:

Your youth's safety is important to you, your doctor, and members of your community. You deserve to have all the information possible to prevent injury risks.

- 1) Have a discussion with your youth and their pediatrician
- 2) If you have further questions, refer to the following resources and continue to do frequent check-ins with your youth:
 - Crisis Text Line - Text 4HOPE to 741741
 - Suicide Prevention Resource Center - <https://www.sprc.org/>
 - Suicide Prevention Lifeline - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
 - Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - Call or Text 988
- 3) If you have life threatening concerns go directly to your local emergency department

Questions?

Ohio AAP resources can be found at: <http://ohioaap.org/storeitsafe>