

Grade 4 Drug Education

Lesson Plan 1: Safe Use of Medications

Health Curriculum Outcomes

Drug Education

1. Relate the major functions of medicines and the importance of safe use and handling.
2. Know that the most reliable sources of prescription drugs are doctors, nurses, and pharmacists.

Mental Health

1. Identify some of the factors which affect our feelings.
2. Identify and demonstrate communication skills during group activities.

Relationships

1. Realize that one's decisions may affect other people.
2. Outline the steps to follow in decision making.

[Link](#) to Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Curriculum Outcomes

This document contains a fully developed lesson plan that is aligned to the outcomes listed above, classroom activities, answer keys, and background information to help support delivery of material.

Classroom Activities and Suggested Timing:

- a. Ground Rules (5-10 minutes)
- b. Activity 1: Would you rather? (10-15 minutes)
- c. What are medications? (15-20 minutes)
- d. Using medications safely:
 - i. Activity 2: 1 Spoonful or 2 (15-20 minutes)
 - ii. Activity 3: Sharing Puffers (15-20 minutes)
- e. Activity 4: Exit Card-Safe Medication Use (5-10 minutes)

Background Information

Definition of 'Drugs'

Drugs are substances or chemicals that affect the way our bodies and mind work and carry out our necessary processes. Drugs can be used to help our bodies work properly. Drugs can also be used in unsafe ways and can have negative effects on the way our body develops and functions. Drugs may have various purposes. Some of these drugs may be used as a part of Indigenous culture for ceremonial use. For example, tobacco is considered to have spiritual and healing benefits.

Examples of drugs include:

- Alcohol
- Caffeine (e.g., energy drinks, coffee, tea, soft drinks)
- Cannabis or Marijuana
- Hallucinogens (e.g., LSD, Mushrooms)
- Medications (e.g., puffers, epi-pens, fever medications, anti-nausea medications, anti-anxiety medications)
- Nicotine (e.g., tobacco, cigarettes, nicotine vapes)
- Opioids (e.g., codeine, morphine, fentanyl, heroin)
- Over-the-counter medications (e.g., cough syrup, pain medications)
- Stimulants (e.g., nicotine, amphetamines [e.g., Adderall, crystal meth], methylphenidate [e.g., Ritalin], cocaine)
- Vaccinations (e.g., flu, COVID-19, tetanus)



Our [Substance Snapshots](#) aim to provide educators with information about the various drugs that are incorporated throughout the activities and discussions in the lesson plans. Each snapshot summarizes how it's used, the different effects, when to seek emergency help, and how to stay safe. These documents are intended to support educators in their delivery of drug education and are not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

Key Considerations

Incorporate the following concepts throughout the lesson plans, materials, and activities:



Use a Skills-Based Health Education (SBHE) Approach

SBHE is a learning approach that uses interactive learning methods. This approach is used throughout the lesson plans so students can learn skills that will promote and protect their health and well-being. Refer to our [SBHE infographic](#) for more information on SBHE and examples of interactive teaching methods and evaluation.



Incorporate the FACE Decision-Making Model

Throughout all lesson plans we use the FACE decision-making model to help guide discussions and activities. The questions associated with each step are intended for educator use to probe students during scenario-based activities. Refer to our [FACE infographics](#) for more information.



Consider Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Implement Trauma Informed Practices (TIPs)

ACEs are stressful or traumatic events that occur in youth. Students who experience ACE(s) have an increased susceptibility to try drugs and may have challenges in learning substance use education. Our [ACEs infographic](#) explains the traumatic events that can impact youth and how educators can support them. Incorporating early drug education that incorporates TIPs can serve as a protective factor. Strategies that educators can use to create a learning environment where every student feels safe is outlined in our [TIPs infographic](#).



Support Students Emotional Wellbeing

Discussion about substance use may provoke a range of feelings. Building a positive rapport is vital to effectively engage youth in conversations. Be respectful of students' comments, questions, and concerns surrounding drug use, regardless of your personal opinions. At the beginning of the lesson, acknowledge that strong feelings may arise and that it is ok to feel this way. If needed, encourage students to speak with the school's guidance counsellor or another trusted adult. Additional supports are located on our [DECYDE website](#).



Avoid the Use of Stigmatizing Language

Lead a dialogue that does not create a stigmatizing atmosphere in the classroom as it may discourage students from engaging in conversations or seeking help. Avoid stigmatizing language and use person-first language, such as "person who uses drugs". For more information about stigma and tips for educators, refer to our [infographic on Stigma](#).

Lesson 1: Safe Use of Medications

Determining how to use medications safely.

Associated Materials

- Activity 1: Would you rather?
- Activity 2: 1 Spoonful or 2
- Activity 3: Sharing Puffers
- Activity 4: Exit Card - Safe Medication Use

This lesson plan is the first in a series of lesson plans, which include [Lesson 2: Non-Medical Drug Use](#) and [Lesson 3: What Influences Drug Use?](#)

a. Ground Rules (5-10 minutes)



Begin the lesson by establishing a list of ground rules together as a class. Allow students to contribute their own ideas for ground rules, while also ensuring that the following key rules are acknowledged:

- Encourage questions and discussion
- Respect each other's opinions
- Keep classroom discussions confidential
- Listen when others are speaking
- Use respectful language
- Avoid using individual names when sharing the experiences of others, instead, use "Someone I know..."
- Use de-stigmatizing language



b. Activity 1: Would You Rather? (10-15 minutes)

Introduce the lesson by completing the [Activity 1: Would You Rather?](#) (available in both Jamboard and Google Forms). Students are presented with two scenarios and asked to choose which scenario they would prefer. The purpose of this activity is for students to begin thinking critically about the decisions they make. Encourage students to use the [FACE Decision-Making Model](#) to help guide their decisions:

Feel:

1. How does this decision make me feel?

Assess:

2. What are my choices?

Choose:

3. Does this choice align with my goals and values?

Evaluate:

4. How would this decision impact my life?
5. What could be some positive and/or negative effects of this decision?



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c. Refresh Prior Knowledge (15-20 minutes)

Introduce the concept of safe medication use by briefly reviewing medications and what they are. See the below questions for guiding this discussion.

Questions to Consider:

1. What do medications do for our bodies?
2. Who uses medications?
3. Why might someone use medications?
4. What are some different types of medications?
5. Where can you get medications?
6. What are some rules for safely using medications?
7. How can medications be harmful or dangerous?



d. Using Medications Safely

Use the following scenarios to introduce students to the [FACE Decision-Making Model](#). This model uses the acronym FACE as a way for students to quickly identify and apply this model to any situation.

- **Feel:** How does this situation make me feel?
- **Assess:** What are my options?
- **Choose:** What is the safest option for me?
- **Evaluate:** What do I think about my decision?

Information about the **FACE Decision-Making Model** can be found on our [website](#).

Display the scenarios below to students and discuss what safe choices can be made in each situation. After watching or reading the scenario, guide students through a discussion using the FACE model (examples provided below). Alternatively, divide the class into pairs or groups and provide them with the scenario templates to discuss the scenarios amongst themselves.

You may also create your own scenarios referring to the safety considerations that should be followed when using medications, for example, promoting awareness around the effects of taking medications with other drugs, ensuring that medication is in its proper packaging or administering medication using the intended method.



Scenarios



Activity 2: 1 Spoonful or 2 (20-25 minutes)

Aaron is at home with his older sister and is feeling sick. This video provides an opportunity for classroom discussion on medication dosage, the importance of following medication labels or instructions from a trusted adult, and safe storage of medication.

Watch the following: [Video 1: 1 Spoonful or 2](#)



Activity 2: How would you FACE this situation?

Ask students to imagine that they are in the same situation as Aaron and they have to decide whether to take one or two spoonful of fever medication. Use the [FACE Decision-Making Model](#) to help guide their decision-making process. This activity is also available in a [Google Doc](#).

Feel:

1. How would I feel in this situation?
2. Why would I feel this way?
3. Who else might have feelings about this situation?

Assess:

4. What are my choices?
5. How could this choice affect me and others?
6. Who can help me make this choice?

Choose:

7. What is the safest choice I can make?

Evaluate:

8. Who can I talk to about my choice?
9. What did I learn from my choice?
10. What decision would I make in the future?



Possible answers for Activity 2: 1 Spoonful or 2

Feel:

1. How would I feel in this situation?
 - Tired of feeling sick and wanting to get better
 - Unsure
2. Why would I feel this way?
 - After being sick for a long time, I just want to feel better
 - I don't know if my parent/guardian/trusted adult would want me to take medicine without them present
 - I don't like taking medicine
3. Who else might have feelings about this situation?
 - My parent/guardian/trusted adult
 - My sibling

Assess:

4. What are my choices?
 - I could take one spoonful like the package says, or I could listen to my sister's advice and take two
 - I could wait for my trusted adult to come home, or I could call them and ask them what I should do
5. How could this choice affect me and others?
 - My parent/guardian might be disappointed with my decision to take medication without adult supervision
 - I don't know how two spoonfuls will affect me since the package says to take one spoonful at my age
 - Taking too much medication could possibly be harmful
 - Our parent/guardian might be disappointed with my sibling's choice to tell me to take two spoonfuls
6. Who can help me make this choice?
 - I can wait for my trusted adult to come home or I can call them
 - Ask my sibling if they think it's a good idea to take two spoonfuls even though the package says one

Choose:

7. What is the safest choice I can make?
 - Wait for an adult to help me
 - I shouldn't be choosing medications on my own or from a basket
 - Take the correct amount of medication for my age

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Evaluate:

8. Who can I talk to about my choice?
 - Answers may vary. A trusted adult.
9. What did I learn from my choice?
 - The importance of following directions on medication
 - To wait for a trusted adult before I take medication
 - You should take medication when you are supervised by a trusted adult
 - You should not take medication from a basket with other medications in case they get mixed up; you should check with a trusted adult before touching medication
 - You should only take what is written on the label or as suggested by your healthcare provider/trusted adult
10. What decision would I make in the future?

Answers may vary.



Activity 3: Sharing Puffers (20-25 minutes)

This scenario provides an opportunity to discuss the importance of not sharing medication. Amara is at her locker with her friend Leah after gym class. Leah has asthma, a condition that affects her breathing. To help manage her asthma she uses a puffer or an inhaler. Amara is curious and asks to try her puffer.

Share the written scenario [FACE Puffer Activity](#) with the students. This activity is also available in a [Google Doc](#) that can be shared with students.



Activity 3: How would you FACE this situation?

Ask students to imagine that they are in the same situation as Leah and they have a friend who is asking to use their medication (in this case, a puffer). Use the [FACE Decision-Making Model](#) to help guide their decision-making process.

Feel:

1. How would I feel in this situation?
2. Why would I feel this way?
3. Who else might have feelings about this situation?

Assess:

4. What are my choices?
5. How could this choice affect me and others?
6. Think about a past situation where you had to make a decision. How did you make your choice?

Choose:

7. What is the safest choice I can make?
8. How do I communicate my choice to my friend?

Evaluate:

9. Who would I talk to about the choice I made?
10. What decision would I make in the future?



Possible answers for Activity 3: Puffers

Feel:

1. How would you feel in this situation?
 - Uncomfortable, worried, annoyed, pressured
2. Why would you feel this way?
 - Because my friend asked to use **my** puffer
 - I don't want to make my friend upset if I say no
3. Who else might have feelings about this situation?
 - My friend might be upset if I say no, and they'll be happy if I say yes
 - My adult at home will probably be upset with my decision because I'm not supposed to share my puffer
 - A teacher might be upset if they see me sharing my puffer

Assess:

4. What are my choices?
 - I let my friend use my puffer or I don't let my friend use it
5. How could this choice affect me and others?
 - My friend would be happy if I let them use it, even though I know that I should not share my medication with them
 - My friend might get upset if I don't share it
6. Think about a past situation where you had to make a decision. How did you make your choice?
 - Answers may vary

Choose:

7. What is the safest choice I can make?
 - **Not** share my puffer with my friend
8. How do I communicate my choice to my friend?
 - "Sorry, I can't share my puffer with anyone"
 - "You should only take medication that is prescribed to you"
 - "You should only take a drug that is prescribed for an illness that you have"

Evaluate:

9. Who would I talk to about the choice I made?
 - Answers may vary. Parent/guardian, teacher, coach, aunt, uncle, older sibling, etc.
10. What decision would I make in the future?
 - Answers may vary

**e. Activity 4: Exit Card- Safe Medication Use**

Provide students with the exit card [Safe Medication Use: Looks Like Candy](#) to conclude lesson. This activity provides students an opportunity to apply their knowledge of safe medication use to a written scenario.

Description:

The student is in their grandparent's kitchen with their siblings. There is a bottle of brightly coloured capsules on the counter. Their little sister thinks they are candy and tries to open the bottle.

Question: What safe choices could you make in this situation? Give two examples.



Possible answers include:

- Teach your sister about how to recognize medication bottles
- Teach your sister about the harm related to using medication that was prescribed to someone else
- Move the bottle to a shelf or area that is out of reach to younger children
- Inform your grandparents or another trusted adult



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Content Created by the Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership (CHERP) Team at Memorial University

DECYDE stands for Drug Education Centred on Youth Decision Empowerment. Through this project, our Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership (CHERP) team of pharmacists, educators, researchers, and students at Memorial University who wish to support substance use education for youth. We further collaborate with a diverse panel of youth in Newfoundland and Labrador who collaborate with the team on creating the DECYDE content.

The key goals of our project are to:

- Provide substance use education that emphasizes harm reduction principles.
- Provide youth with information and support the development of decision-making skills about substance use.
- Provide youth with the knowledge and skills to make safe and informed decisions surrounding substance use.
- Provide educators with accessible and easy-to-follow lesson plans that contain valid and reliable information.

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