

Prepped & Ready

EXPERTS EDITION

Parenting into the Teen Years



Children's Mercy
KANSAS CITY

SUICIDE PREVENTION: MEANS RESTRICTION

This pamphlet is meant for parents and guardians. The goal is to provide education on ways to make our homes safer. We know that young people can be impulsive, so limiting access to items in our homes that can be used for self-harm is very important.

While it is difficult to think about, we want to discuss ways to make your home safer, to decrease the risk of suicide in your home. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for teens in our community, and we want to help change this trend. Studies tell us that limiting access to the objects that are used in suicide is one of the best ways to do this. Restricting access is an ongoing effort that assures your home environment remains as safe as possible.

“ Our daughter was an avid shooter and hunter. She had access to guns all the time. She had her own firearms to hunt with and to go to the range. My fault as a parent was I never once thought she would use them to end her life. Knowing what I know now, I would have kept them locked up in safe where she could only access them with my permission. We also had multiple medicines from her surgeries that she had access to for pain. Looking back if she wanted to kill herself and didn't have access to a firearm she could have easily overdosed on her pain medication. I was of the belief that these things were well planned and thought out. I have found out from talking to many parents, hundreds of them impacted by suicide, that in almost every single case it was an impulse decision and no notes were left. ”

Father of child lost to suicide

FIREARMS

Firearms account for about half of the suicide deaths in our area.

- We advise storing firearms outside the home if possible.
- For firearms stored in the home, the safest approach is making sure firearms are **stored locked up, unloaded, with the ammunition locked up separately**.
- We are not against guns, we are against our patients having access to guns when feeling desperate.

MEDICATIONS

- Some of the most dangerous overdoses we see include prescription and over-the-counter medications like diphenhydramine (Benadryl), acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). For these and other medications, we recommend keeping only a small amount unlocked in a pill organizer (if being used) and locking the rest up in a safe and secure place such as a locked cabinet, drawer, or box. Dispose of any leftover prescription medications to reduce the risk of accidental exposure or misuse. To learn about safe medication storage and disposal, including opioids, go to: cmkc.link/SafeStorage.
- Many medications are dangerous when combined with alcohol as well so **we encourage you to limit access to alcohol in your home**.

SHARP OBJECTS

Limiting access to sharp objects like knives and razor blades is important for those who self-injure.

ROPES/CORDS

It is important to know that death by hanging has become more common among youth as well, and so limiting access to ropes is important.

SUPERVISION

Part of a strong safety plan is making sure we increase supervision for young people at risk for suicide. Some parents do a “room sweep” to check for items that could be used in suicide. If you see something odd that doesn't make sense, do not hesitate to ask about it.

Safety Items



Soap to dispose of old medications.



Gun Lock*



Gun Lock Box*



Pill Dispenser



Lock Box

*Lock box and cable gun lock included for participants who indicated firearm ownership on the survey.



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