

BEFORE THE TALK

PREPARATION TIPS

- 1** Print the Attendance Sheet to pass around.
- 2** At your meeting, discuss the many medications that can impair a person’s mental and physical abilities. Here are a few examples:
 - Antihistamines, Decongestants, Cough syrups, which may contain a narcotic or alcohol, Painkillers, Tranquilizers, Sedatives, Marijuana and sleeping pills and bedtime cold remedies that can have a hangover effect the next day.
- 3** Be ready to discuss some of the situations where the use of over-the-counter remedies could result in unsafe working conditions. These might be jobs involving vehicles or machinery, or other circumstances where a worker would need to think and react quickly and clearly. You may also choose to discuss this topic with your company’s medical department prior to your presentation and ask for their input.
- 4** What is your company’s policy on drug use? Be prepared to review it with the participants.
- 5** Check with your company’s safety department for statistics about injuries related to drug use at work, as well as injuries linked to fatigue.
- 6** Invite someone from your human resources department to attend this meeting and answer questions about sick day policies.
- 7** Did you know that the body processes every drug differently? Here are at least three of the ways you can inadvertently interfere with how your body processes OTC or prescription medicines:
 - Stirring medicine into your food or taking capsules apart, Mixing medicine into hot drinks, Taking other medicines, vitamins and minerals, which may change the way your body absorbs, spreads or metabolizes the new medicine

AFTER THE TALK

CHECKLIST

- Provided follow-up to workers who did poorly on quiz
Date: _____
- Observed workers
Date: _____
- Refresher training
Date: _____
- Other (describe)

Date: _____

Date: _____
 Location: _____
 Meeting conducted by: _____

MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY: Each participant is to sign below, for record kept on file.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Answers to T201204-02 Quiz: 1. False, 2. False Drowsiness is just one possible side effect and awareness is required to operate any workplace machinery. 3. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist and read the label and other materials that accompany the drug., 4. A list of all prescription and non-prescription drugs, including vitamins and minerals. 5. True

Some Medications Are the Wrong Prescription for Safety

What's at Stake?

We all know that illegal drugs such as marijuana or cocaine are hazardous to use. We also know that alcohol is prohibited at work because it is, obviously, intoxicating. But did you know that many other drugs that we take for granted can also affect your ability to do your job safely?

What's the Danger?

Back pain, allergies and other medical conditions, including colds and the flu, are often treated with prescription and over-the-counter medications. These medications, even those sold without a prescription, can make it unsafe for you to operate a motor vehicle or workplace machinery. And the effects may be more severe if you are tired or ill.

Example

A ferry pilot was convicted of manslaughter in connection with a fatal ferry crash in New York Harbor and sentenced to 18 months jail.

Assistant Capt. Richard Smith, who was fatigued and taking painkillers, blacked out at the controls of the Staten Island ferry on October 15, 2003. The ferry, carrying 1,500 passengers, slammed into a concrete pier at full speed, killing 11 passengers and injuring dozens of others.

The painkillers he was taking, Tramadol and Tylenol PM, list drowsiness among their possible side effects.

Smith pleaded guilty to a charge of negligent manslaughter and apologized in court to families of those killed and injured, adding 'I will regret for the rest of my life that I did not just call in sick.'

How to Protect Yourself

As a responsible person you might stop taking the drug or choose not to drive when you become aware of the effect. But this awareness can come too late, with a traffic crash or workplace injury before you realize you cannot think or react as fast as usual.

Here are some guidelines for safer use of prescription and over-the-counter medications:

1. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the effects of prescription and non-prescription drugs you will be taking that

may affect your ability to perform safely.

2. Let your supervisor know of any such restrictions.
3. Make arrangements to avoid driving and operating machinery until you are sure you will not be affected.
4. Read the labels and printed material which accompany the medicine, and strictly follow the instructions.
5. Carry a list of all your prescription and over-the-counter medicines with you, including any vitamins, minerals and other products.
6. Be ready for effects to be more pronounced when you first begin taking the drug. For instance, anti-depressants can cause sleepiness for a new user who later adjusts to the chemical change. Try your first doses in a safe environment.
7. Do not skip taking your prescription medicines.
8. Do not take more than the suggested dose of prescription and non-prescription drugs.
9. Do not share prescription medicines.
10. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about how long you should use the remedies and when you should start to feel better.

Final Word

It's important to be aware of the possible dangers of using prescription drugs and over-the-counter remedies prior to or during work shifts. Be sure to follow all directions and precautions carefully. Talk to your supervisor if you have doubts about your ability to work safely when you are taking a medication.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Only prescription drugs have side effects that may interfere with your ability to safely do your job.
 True False
2. If your job doesn't involve driving, you don't need to worry about side effects of prescription or over-the-counter medication.
 True False
3. How do you find out if your medication may affect your ability to perform safely?

4. When taking any form of medication, what should you carry with you at all times?

5. The effects of prescription and non-prescription drugs can be more pronounced when you first begin taking the drug.
 True False

What Would You Do?

For the past week your co-worker has been complaining about a sore back that's keeping him awake at night. You've been through a similar injury yourself and have a few painkillers left over that your doctor prescribed. They relieved your pain and helped you get some sleep. You're sure the pills will help your co-worker. Should you share them with him? Why or why not?
