**Nursing Notes**



Clean It Out or Lock It Up: Preventing Access To Substances That Could Be Abused

Don’t forget your medicine cabinet when it comes to spring cleaning this year. Getting rid of unused or expired medication helps prevent accidental overdose or misuse and abuse.

Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S. More than half of people who misuse prescription drugs got them from a friend or relative with a prescription, or took them without asking. And about 80 percent of heroin users started out misusing prescription painkillers.

April school vacation week and then summer vacation often lead to more time alone in the home for kids. So once you’ve cleaned out the medicine cabinet, keep cleaning the rest of the home for other substances that could be abused. Inhalants such as gases, fuels, products with solvents and anything in an aerosol can (like air freshener or whipped cream) are often the first substance children try. Children in elementary school and up have been found using them.

Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance by teens, so if you choose to keep it in the home, keeping it secure is important.

Prescription medication (pills only – no sharps or liquids) can be disposed of at Newton Police Headquarters, 1321 Washington St., anytime, or as part of National Take-Back Day behind Police Headquarters on April 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Information provided as part of Newton PATH, Mayor Warren’s multidisciplinary team committed to confronting the public health opioid epidemic. For more information and resources, visit our website at [www.newtonma.gov/NewtonPATH](http://www.newtonma.gov/NewtonPATH)

Stay Healthy,

Sue