

## MEDIA CONTACT

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When it comes to searing summers and bitter winters, Oklahoma does not mess around. This is why Oklahomans should be thinking about more than just their wardrobe when checking the daily weather. Prescription and over the counter medicine is not safe when left out in the heat or any other extreme temperature. Summer months can also cause dehydration. Did you know that certain medications can also be a cause of dehydration? On majority of prescription pill bottles and many over the counter medications there is specific instructions to not mix medications with alcohol. Medications, alcohol, and dehydration can all result in serious health concerns.

### **How can weather affect your medicine?**

The potency of the medicine can be compromised, which effects how effective the medication is. Test Strips are sensitive to humidity that may lead to false readings. Toxic byproducts can be developed that injure the human body. Stomach and intestinal issues may occur as components of the medicine break down.

### **How can medication effect YOUR plans for safe storage and safe use?**

Red Rock Regional Prevention Coordinator (RPC) Sarah Keeth encourages you to pay extra attention to how you store your medicine. Keep medicine in a climate controlled area that ranges from 68 to 77 degrees F.

TSA in all airport securities requires citizens to have their prescription medications in the original bottle with the citizen's name and dose clearly visible. If you are not planning to travel via air, pillboxes are a strong strategy for safely storing and high patient compliance.

High altitudes from air travel can potentially affect efficacy of medications as well. If you are a frequent flyer or just occasionally on board for a family vacation, Red Rock RPC recommends packing medications in your carry-on luggage instead of a suitcase. Suitcases can experience traumatic travel from extreme temperatures and excessive movement. Safe storage is just as important as safe use and safe disposal. Stolen and contaminated medicine is a rising problem in the United States and can be avoided with safely storing medicine in locked, zipped, and secure locations.

There are several factors that indicate that medication may need discarded. If you notice that medication is hard or softer than normal, stuck together and "runny," producing an unknown odor, and/or changed in color after opening the bottle, do not take the medication until clearing with a doctor or acquiring a new batch. Even if the medication

looks normal, extreme temperatures may still have negative effects. Ms. Keeth from Red Rock recommends that you begin to proceed with caution when taking medications. “Take an extra glance at the physical properties of your medicine and if the internal effects of the medications seem to appear different. Jot notes down in your phone or on paper if you have questions or concerns to ask your physician. Do your research and keep yourself educated on what you’re putting into your body.”



## What effects can Alcohol have on Medicine?

A combination of alcohol and certain medications may result in headaches, stomach upset such as nausea and vomiting, fainting, loss of coordination, and drowsiness. Alcohol can cause medication to be toxic or harmful to the body or to become incompetent or less effective.

## Is there anything else I should know?

Age can have a huge impact on the effects of alcohol and medications. The brain is not fully developed until age 25. If individuals in their early 20s and below use alcohol, it slows down the brain's growth and causes challenges or obstructions to individual's memories. Red Rock RPC encourages adults and youth to abide by the legal drinking age of 21 for community and individual safety. We also encourage adults to recognize signs of dehydration especially if consuming alcohol beverages. Truly, there is no way to know the exact effects alcohol in combination with prescription drugs can have on individuals.

Red Rock RPC also recommends that you carry Naloxone on hand to plan for unintentional overdose from an opioid. 34 Oklahomans die every month from unintentional prescription opioid poisoning (Oklahoma State Dept. of Health 2018). We as a community and as Regional Prevention Coordinators are determined to see this horrid statistic change for the better. Red Rock Behavioral Health Services provides free Naloxone kits. Red Rock RPC provides free training and assistance in policy or programming surrounding opioid use prevention, underage alcohol laws, and responsible alcohol sales and services. Providing alcohol and a place to drink alcohol is a violation of the Social Host law and Underage Drinking law. Taking prescription medication not addressed to the correct individual

is always illegal. Let's take precautions and develop plans and actions towards safely storing medicine and knowing what to do in case of an emergency. Let's protect our youth and community from potential dangers associated with underage alcohol sales and over service of alcohol. For more information contact Red Rock RPC at 405-761-1146.



Regional Prevention Coordinator (Region 13) grant is funded by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and Center for Substance Abuse Prevention