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Why Parents Should Lock Up Prescription Drugs

Dad's Powerful Warning About Locking Up Prescriptions After His 12-Year-Old Overdosed



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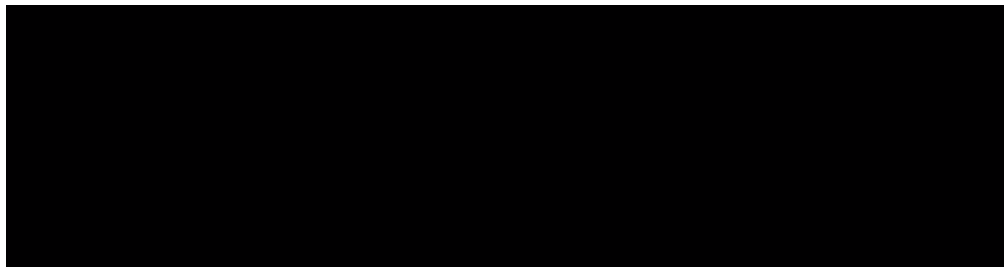


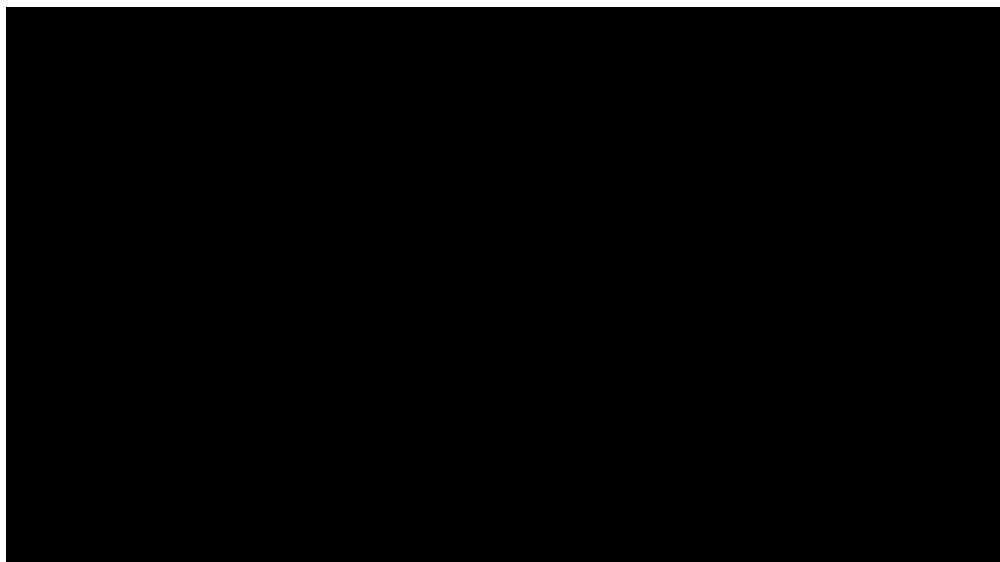
"A little foreknowledge, plus about \$50, and my daughter would have lived to see 13," begins Jordan Magill's powerful essay [warning parents of the dangers of keeping prescription drugs out in the open](#) after his 12-year-old daughter accidentally overdosed on his antidepressants.

One May morning in 2016, Jordan's wife burst into the bathroom where he was showering to tell him their daughter wouldn't wake up. While his other daughter dialed 911, Jordan sat on the floor soaking wet and pounding on his unresponsive daughter's chest. "The EMTs pulled me — still dripping, still naked — off her and rushed her to the hospital," he wrote in the essay published to **The Washington Post**. "The ER doctor, a soft-spoken woman who looked half my age, put her hand on my shoulder. My brilliant, bubbly daughter showed 'no brain function.' Ever full of life, she was dead."

In the days that followed, Jordan and his wife "pieced together the course of events from the autopsy report," recalling their daughter telling them the night before her death that she had thrown up:

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A day earlier, sometime around 5 p.m., our daughter swallowed a palm full of my prescription anti-depressants, more than 10 times my daily dosage. Right after, she vomited. That evening, she told her friends and us about vomiting. Like any parent, we took her temperature (normal), got her some fluids (ginger ale), and put her to bed early. She never told us about the pills. Critically, this particular drug is time-release. Once capsules rupture, the medication cannot be purged. Vomiting does nothing to rid the body of the poison, a fact to which we are sure she was ignorant (since we were). The same pharmaceutical magic that allows for steady time release holds the black dog of my depression at bay — tiny particles of slow-dissolving medication designed to pass with ease and rapidity into the intestines — makes them un-purgeable. Irony, meet tragedy.

Perhaps the most heartbreaking detail Jordan discovered in the aftermath of his daughter's death was that based on her text messages to friends about weekend plans and future trips, it's clear his girl expected to wake up the next morning, unharmed by her actions. Which makes the unknown aspects of her death even harder for Jordan and his wife to process, as they truly will never know why their daughter chose to swallow those pills in the first place, what was going on in her "teenager's brain."

Jordan mentions early on in his essay the things he and his partner were warned about in regard to their children as soon as they announced their first pregnancy, but never were they warned about their "pharmacy in the bathroom" and keeping medications locked up:

The pediatricians tell everyone of dangers: grapes (halved!), electrical sockets (covered!), promiscuity (don't!), screen time (not too much!). Sure, we read brochures about toddlers mistaking pills for candy, and kept caps well secured. That, however, was years ago. Yes, we knew of the danger of opioids (and therefore kept none in our house). No one mentioned securing other pharmaceuticals from adolescents and teens. Our medicine cabinet, the unlocked arsenal of our family tragedy.

Now, at a friend's house, spotting a vial of medicine for convenience sake left on a windowsill is enough to bring a panic attack. Medicine bottles on their bathroom counter look like shotguns. . . . A kid at home with an unsecured medication might just as well be left with a loaded gun. No child should be so vulnerable. . . . We secure guns. Likewise, we should secure medication. Because it isn't just opioids that can kill.

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Jordan is sharing his warning with everyone — even those who don't think this type of thing could ever happen to their family — because in his house where three children once slept, there are now only two, and he doesn't want any parent to have to go through the preventable and devastating tragedy his family has. "A locked medicine chest now sits beneath my sink. The price online was \$48.99," he wrote. "Not having it earlier — that was the real cost. It is a price no parent should pay."

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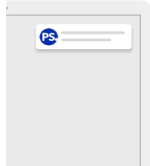
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