

A recent article on [NPR](#) announced that “Poisonings of children by medication rose by one-third between 2001 and 2008” and declared that the youngest children were often poisoned when they picked up a pill off the floor and ate it. This illustrates the critical importance of making certain that [pill counting](#) takes place not only at the pharmacy, but also by all adults who handle those pills once they arrive home.

Unfortunately, it is not just the opiate painkiller drugs that are a threat to children. Their young bodies also cannot tolerate those drugs that are critical to their parents’ and grandparents’ health. Nearly half the hospitalizations of younger children were from drugs used to treat diabetics, which are becoming increasingly common in our progressively obese society. The fact that the number of adults taking prescription medications has increased by 10 percent means that there are also more drugs in the home, and more adults who are new to using and handling these powerful compounds.

The report also found that teenagers, who take pills intentionally rather than by accident, were the most likely to be harmed by opiates and statins. Whether teens are seeking to get high or to commit suicide, the ready availability of these drugs will increase the likelihood of hospitalization and serious injury.

All of this illustrates the importance of vigilant handling of all prescription medications. In addition to careful pill counting at the point of dispensation, pharmacists should include counseling at the pharmacy window, to make certain that adults are cautious in handling their prescriptions, lock up opiate drugs if there are teens in the home, and monitor the rate at which they use the pills in their bottles, in case some pills might be disappearing down their teenagers’ throats. [Contact us](#) today to discuss pill counting and other essential pharmacy procedures.