

Reducing Access to Lethal Means of Suicide

STRONG4LIFE™



Lethal means are objects or items (e.g., firearms, medications, chemicals, sharp objects, etc.) that can be used to inflict self-harm and are associated with a high chance of death.

Why it's important to reduce access to lethal means

Many suicide attempts occur when someone is experiencing a crisis. While in crisis, a person may have a thought of suicide and be more likely to act impulsively or be quick to use whatever they have access to. By reducing access to lethal means, we're adding time and space between the person's suicidal thoughts and their taking action, giving them a chance to consider alternatives, get help or allow someone to intervene.

Securing or removing lethal means

Medications and chemicals

- Safely dispose of unnecessary medications and chemicals from the home (e.g., hydrochloric acid, antifreeze, pesticides, etc.).
- Secure needed medications and chemicals in a locked container.
- Give only one dose of prescribed and over-the-counter medications at a time.

Alcohol

- Remove from the home or safely secure in a locked container.

Firearms

- Remove guns from the home while someone is at risk.

If keeping a gun in the home, follow these storage guidelines:

- **Unload the firearm.** Never keep a loaded gun in the house (or car).
- **Lock the firearm** using a lockbox or gun safe. You can use trigger and/or cable locks as additional safety measures.
- **Add layers of protection:**
 - Store ammunition locked, and in a separate location from firearms.
 - Use personalized lockboxes or combinations rather than keypad lockboxes.
 - Store lockboxes and safes out of reach and sight.
 - Keep keys away from kids and teens.

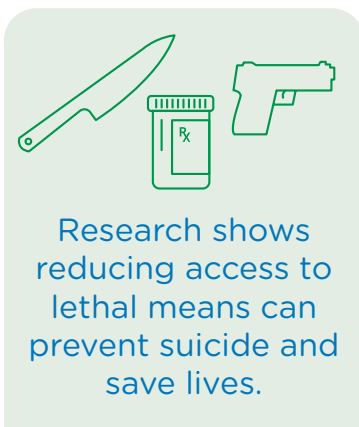
Starting the conversation and providing support

- Ask directly: "Are you having thoughts of suicide?"
- Actively listen without judgement.

If the person is having thoughts of suicide:

- **Thank the person for sharing**, and acknowledge their bravery.

- **Let them know they're not alone** and stay with them until they're connected to more support.
- **Call or text 988.** The national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, offering free and confidential support for people in distress, as well as prevention and crisis resources.



Scan or click on the QR code to learn more about firearm storage.



Scan or click on the QR code to learn more about preventing suicide.