

# TEENS AND PRESCRIPTION



Common questions. Simple answers.

## WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMONLY MISUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?

**Pain relievers:** Codeine, oxycodone (OxyContin<sup>®</sup>, Percocet<sup>®</sup>), hydrocodone (Vicodin<sup>®</sup>).

**Sedatives/tranquilizers:** Mephobarbital (Mebaral<sup>®</sup>), alprazolam (Xanax<sup>®</sup>), diazepam (Valium<sup>®</sup>)

**Stimulants:** Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine<sup>®</sup>), amphetamine/dextroamphetamine salts (Adderall<sup>®</sup>), methylphenidate hydrochloride (Ritalin<sup>®</sup>) and methylphenidate hydrochloride (Concerta<sup>®</sup>)

## WHY ARE TEENS EXPERIMENTING WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?

- They want to get high.
- They succumb to peer pressure.
- They don't understand the risky behavior that is associated with drug use.
- They believe that because a health care provider prescribed them, they're safe.
- They can get them more easily than illegal drugs or alcohol.

## WHERE DO THEY GET THEM?

- They're commonly found in medicine cabinets.
- Even if teens don't have prescription medications in their house, they might know someone who does.
- Many prescription drugs are also illicitly sold by drug dealers.

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF MISUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?

- Physical tolerance, requiring more drug to have the same effect
- Physical dependence, resulting in withdrawal symptoms when they stop using
- Impaired perception and brain development
- Irregular heartbeat
- Dangerously high body temperature
- Seizures
- Fatal overdose



## ARE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ADDICTIVE?

- Yes, a prescription drug can be addictive, especially if it's misused. If it's a prescription, the person using it should only use as advised by a doctor. Pain relievers, sedatives, and stimulants all create the potential for physical tolerance and dependence—sometimes even when taken as prescribed.
- Many health care providers will prescribe only as much as is needed.
- It's important to take a prescription drug only for as long as a health care provider prescribes and to stay in communication with the health care provider about pain management.
- Some prescription drugs are very similar to addictive street drugs, like heroin.

## HELPING TO PREVENT TEEN PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE

- Prevention is key.
- Educate your teen about the potential harm that can come from misusing prescription medication and other drugs.
- Try role-playing situations to offer your teen a way to handle harm that could come with abusing prescriptions. Make a plan with your teen—potentially using a code word—to help them get out of potentially harmful situations where prescription drug use and peer pressure may be involved.

## KEEP TEENS SAFE FROM PILLS BY KEEPING PILLS SAFE FROM TEENS.

- Realize you may have dangerous prescription drugs right in your home.
- Make sure that your medications are safely stored in a place where they're hard to find.
- Get rid of any unused, leftover, or expired medications at a local drug disposal location. To learn where local Delaware drug disposal dropboxes are located, visit <https://www.helpisherede.com/Get-Help/Prescription-Drug-Drop-Box>.

**NOW I'VE GOT THE FACTS — WHAT'S NEXT?**

You can visit [talk2kidsaboutdrugs.com](https://talk2kidsaboutdrugs.com) for trusted, factual information for families and educators.

