

Not Worth The Risk
X even if it's legal

Maximizing Your Role as a Teen Influencer: *What You Can Do To Help Prevent Teen Prescription Drug Abuse*



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
www.samhsa.gov

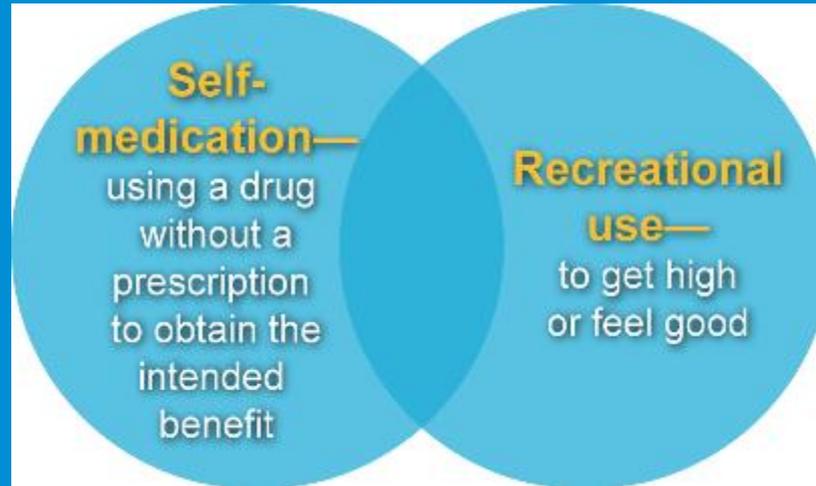
EDUCATE before
YOU MEDICATE

The NCPIC
Coalition-working
together to promote
safe medicine use

National Council on Patient Information and Education
www.talkaboutrx.org

What is Rx drug abuse?

- The misuse of Rx drugs is a growing, under-recognized problem that puts young lives at risk.
- Misuse includes:



- Rx drugs serve an important purpose when used *under a doctor's care*.
- Misuse can lead to overdose, addiction and even death.

The Problem

- 1 in 5 teens has abused Rx drugs.
- 1 in 3 teens reports there is “nothing wrong” when using Rx drugs “every once and a while.”
- 1 in 3 teens report knowing someone who abuses Rx drugs.
- Every day, almost 2,500 teens abuse a prescription drug for the first time.
- Prescription drugs are abused more than cocaine, heroin, ecstasy and methamphetamine combined.

Dangers of Abusing Rx Drugs

- Increases in blood pressure or heart rate
- Damage to brain and other organs
- Accidental overdose/poisonings
- Physical dependence
- Addiction
- Disruption in breathing (respiratory depression)
- Seizures
- Death
- Risks associated with mixing multiple drugs or combining with alcohol



Why Are Teens Abusing Rx Drugs?

- They're easy to get
- Thrill seeking
- Friends are doing it
- Escape problems or self-medicate
- Lack of self-esteem
- Seen as safer alternative with fewer side effects
- Less stigma associated with Rx drugs
- Parents less likely to disapprove

Why Are Teens Abusing Rx Drugs?

- They're looking for help.
- Feeling good or getting a “high” is not as big a motivator as with street drugs.





Other Factors Driving Trend: Accessibility

- Rx medicines can be found in homes of family or friends.
- Many parents aren't aware of the dangers.
- Many parents do not know how to effectively talk with their children about Rx drug abuse.



Other Factors Driving Trend: Invincibility

- Teens mistakenly believe:
 - It's safer to abuse Rx drugs than illicit drugs, even if they're not prescribed by a doctor.
 - Rx drugs have fewer side effects and are not as addictive.
 - It's okay to share these drugs.



Other Factors Driving Trend: Pill-Taking Society

- Rx medications are all around us...and teens notice.
 - Patients leave the doctor's office with a prescription in hand in 7 out of 10 visits.
 - Direct-to-consumer advertising on TV and in magazines.
- Many people don't know how to safely use these medications or ignore their doctor's instructions.

Teens Rx Drugs of Choice for Abuse

	How they work	Abused by teens to	Drug names
Strong Pain Relievers	Used to relieve moderate-to-severe pain, these medications block pain signals to the brain	To get high, increase feelings of well being by affecting the brain regions that mediate pleasure	Vicodin, OxyContin, Percocet, Lorcet, Lortab, Actiq, Darvon, codeine, morphine, methadone
Stimulants	Primarily used to treat ADHD type symptoms, these speed up brain activity causing increased alertness, attention, and energy that comes with elevated blood pressure, increased heart rate and breathing	Feel alert, focused and full of energy—perhaps around final exams or to manage coursework, lose weight	Adderall, Dexedrine Ritalin, Concerta
Sedatives or tranquilizers	Used to slow down or “depress” the functions of the brain and central nervous system	Feel calm, reduce stress, sleep	Valium, Xanax, Ativan, Klonopin, Restoril, Ambien, Lunesta, Mebaral, Nembutal, Soma

Parents, grandparents and others

- Many teens report that their parents have the greatest influence on their drug use attitudes and decisions.
- Kids who continue to learn about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50% less likely to use drugs than those who are not taught about these dangers.
- Parents (and other family members) are in the best position to reduce access to prescription drugs by locking up medicines and properly disposing of expired or unused medicines.

Educators: teachers, coaches, guidance counselors, advisors and others

- Students spend at least 7 hours/day at school-- often more time than spent with parents.
- For many students, school may be the one place they can find a supportive adult to talk to.
- Educators or counselors may see behavior changes and intervene before parents do.

Healthcare providers

- Are well positioned to assess emotional and physical development of teenage patients, as well as their adjustment to life changes and stressors.
- Can talk to teens about drug-taking behaviors, especially with those who show signs of being at risk for misusing or abusing drugs.
- Have the skills and training needed to identify Rx drug abuse and help teens and their parents recognize any problems early on.

Talking to Teens About Rx Drug Abuse

Brief screening/intervention

- A conversation in the hallway, in the car ride home or on the field can make a difference.

Empathize with teens

- Validate common stressors facing teens (pressure to excel academically/get into college, fit in with peers, find their place in the world).
- Provide healthy alternatives for coping (exercise, picking up a sport, drug-free social activities).

Talking to Teens About Rx Drug Abuse

“Denormalize” the behavior

- While 1 in 5 teens are abusing Rx drugs, 4 in 5 are not.

Debunk common myths

- Just as dangerous as other substances.
- Can be as addictive.
- It’s not okay to misuse these drugs, even “once and a while.”

If you are a parent

- Set limits and let teens know you will be disappointed.
 - Watch how you use medicines in front of teens.
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Talking to Teens About Rx Drug Abuse

- Give teens an escape route
 - Teach them how to get out of a bad situation.
 - Suggest a response they can use so they don't feel "uncool."
 - "I don't want to ruin my season/get in trouble with the coach."
 - "I have to do something with my parents really early tomorrow morning."
 - "I'm the designated driver."
 - "I'm not interested."
 - "No, thanks."



Ways to Help

- Teens learn by example
 - When they see mom, dad, a sibling or grandparent taking a pill—even if responsibly—it doesn't seem so bad.
- Most people don't keep track of their medications
 - **Monitor** all medications in the home—prescription and OTC medicines.
 - **Safely store** medicines out of children's reach and sight. Consider locking them up.
 - **Get rid** of old or unused medicines.



Make an Ongoing Difference

- **Pass it On** – give this workshop to other teen influencers.
 - Partner with local community and religious organizations.
 - Team up with the school's guidance department or resource officer.
 - Contact your local PTA to see how you can help. Offer to speak at their next meeting.
- **Plan a town hall meeting** to inform your community about the problem.

Make an Ongoing Difference

- **Find out** whether there are teen-driven initiatives locally.
- **Lend your voice** and time to a local coalition working on these issues.
- **Enlist** a local pediatrician, pharmacist, nurse or other healthcare provider to help deliver message.
- **Share** and tap into existing resources.
- **Engage your local news media** to increase awareness.

Resources

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
www.cadca.org

D.A.R.E. America
www.dare.org

National Council on Patient Information and Education
www.talkaboutrx.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.nida.nih.gov/students

Partnership for a Drug-Free America
www.drugfree.org

Students Against Destructive Decisions, Inc.
www.sadd.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov



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THANK YOU FOR COMING!

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