

The streets aren't the only place
kids find drugs.



Sometimes they find them right at home.

A Parents' Guide to Understanding Prescription Drug Abuse



For more information go to
www.SafeguardMyMeds.org

What Parents Can Do?...

You have much more influence on your children than you think!

They watch what you do and adopt your values. Even though they pretend that they aren't listening... they are!

Educate yourself.

Learn about which drugs kids most often abuse and recognize the signs that your child might be abusing prescription medications, including:

- Loss of interest in appearance, sports or social activities
- Cash, valuables or medication missing from the home
- Sudden mood changes
- Changes in friends
- Deceitful and secretive behavior
- Irregular schedule
- Sleeping excessively or at atypical times
- Noticeable increase in snoring

There could be other reasons not related to drug abuse for these physical and behavioral signs. Attention is warranted especially if they continue or occur in clusters?

Be more aware.

What kind of medications do you have in your household? Do you know how medications are stored in the homes of family members or friends where your child spends time?

Keep medications in a safe place.

When your child was a toddler, you probably kept powerful chemicals out of reach. Take the same approach with your medications. Your kids are just as curious as teens as they were as toddlers and peer pressure can be an added driving force.



Monitor your medications.

Always know how many pills are in your prescription bottles. Keep a written inventory to keep track.

Dispose of old or unused medications properly.

Many people hold on to prescription medications even after they have expired or are no longer needed. Different drugs need to be disposed of in different ways.

Check with your pharmacist about how to properly dispose of unneeded drugs.

Spread the word.

Once you've become informed, talk to family members, neighbors, and the parents of your children's friends and encourage them to safeguard their medications. Share information at Parent-Teacher Association meetings or other groups where parents gather.

Spend time with your teen and get to know their friends and their friends' parents.

Teens who feel a close bond with a parent or other adult are less likely to want to disappoint them.

Reinforce positive behaviors.

Encourage your child to be an independent thinker – praise him or her for having the courage to resist peer pressure and make wise choices.

Most Important– Talk to Your Children!



Make sure they know the following:

- Taking **ANY** prescription medication that is not prescribed to them by a doctor is drug abuse and it is dangerous.
- Medications are powerful drugs that can be very beneficial when taken properly under a doctor's supervision, but experimenting with prescription drugs – even once – can lead to an overdose or death. Explain that these risks increase dramatically when drugs and/or alcohol are mixed.
- Find out what they already know – what they've heard, what they've learned at school and what their friends are saying.
- Set clear standards and expectations around ALL types of substance abuse, including abuse of prescription medications. Family rules about drugs give kids something to fall back on when they are tempted to make poor decisions.

Facts and Figures

- Prescription drug abuse IS STILL DRUG ABUSE. **It is dangerous and can be deadly.**
- 2,500 teens begin abusing prescription drugs each day.¹
- Many kids believe medications are safer to abuse than illegal drugs – but abusing prescription drugs can lead to addiction, overdose, and even death.²
- Next to marijuana, the most common drugs teens are using to get high are prescription medications.²
- 70% of people age 12 and older who abuse prescription drugs say they get them from a friend or relative.³
- The most commonly abused prescription drugs are pain medications, sleeping pills, anti-anxiety medications and stimulants (used to treat attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders).²
- 1 in every 5 teens in America has taken a prescription pain medication that was not prescribed for them.¹
- 60% of teens who have abused prescription painkillers did so before the age of 15.¹
- 12–17 year olds abuse prescription drugs more than ecstasy, heroin, crack/cocaine and methamphetamines combined.¹



1. The Partnership at Drugfree.org/ONDCP, "Teens and Prescription Drugs, Feb. 2007 2. Office of National Drug Control Policy: Prescription for Danger, January 2008 3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), Office of Applied Studies, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2008

Where To Go For More Information:

Information for Parents

The Partnership® at Drugfree.org
www.drugfree.org 1-855-DRUGFREE
(See also: www.timetotalk.org, www.timetoact.drugfree.org)

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
www.theantidrug.com Key word: Prescription Drugs

RxSAFETYMATTERS www.rxsafetymatters.org

Resources for Teachers

National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.drugabuse.gov/parent-teacher.html

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

Resources for Communities

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

Drug Disposal

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov Key word: Disposal

Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov
Key word: Treatment Information

The Partnership® at Drugfree.org
www.timetogethelp.drugfree.org 1-855-DRUGFREE

For more information go to
www.SafeguardMyMeds.org



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