Parents: Get Smart About Teen Prescription (Rx) Drug Abuse.

Teen prescription drug abuse is when a young person takes a prescription medication that was prescribed for someone else, for a non-medical use.

Facts

- 1 in 4 teens has taken a prescription drug that was not prescribed for them by a doctor.¹
- Every day, 2,500 teens take a prescription pain reliever for a non-medical use for the first time.²
- More teens abuse prescription medications than illegal drugs, except marijuana.³

Serious Risks to Teens:

- Abusing prescription medications is not safer than taking illegal “street” drugs like cocaine or heroin.
- Teen prescription drug abuse can result in addiction, health issues, and can be fatal.
- Mixing prescription drugs with alcohol and illegal drugs is particularly dangerous and can be fatal.
- Teen prescription drug abuse can impact a young person’s developing brain and good judgment, their relationships with family and friends, and academic performance.

Your Home: Safe Zone or Danger Zone?

Teens often get their hands on prescription drugs right in their own homes — from a parent or relative’s medicine cabinet, drawer or kitchen cupboard.

- 64 percent of teens (age 12-17) that have abused prescription pain relievers say they got them from friends or relatives.⁴

Take Action Now

1. Create a Safe Environment
   - Know what’s in your medicine cabinet
   - Properly dispose of unused or expired medications
   - Secure all prescription medications in a safe place
   - Educate family and friends (especially grandparents)

2. Notice Common Signs of Abuse
   - Physical and psychological changes
   - Changes in academic performance
   - Pills missing from the medicine cabinet

3. Talk to Your Teens
   - Be open and non-judgmental
   - Communicate regularly
   - Talk about dangers of prescription drug abuse

Research shows that teens who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50 percent less likely to try drugs.⁵

Medications Most Commonly Abused

- **Opioids** — commonly known as prescription painkillers.
- **Sedatives** — such as anti-anxiety and sleep disorder medications.
- **Stimulants** — such as medication to treat Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

For more information about prescription drug abuse, visit [SmartMovesSmartChoices.org](http://SmartMovesSmartChoices.org)

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