

Prescription drug abuse can affect anyone; your child, your best friend, or even you. Learn how addiction can be prevented and do your part to help fight prescription drug abuse.



PREVENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE



HELP STOP PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

- Store prescriptions in their original packaging
- Keep prescriptions hidden in a secure, locked location, away from children and visitors
- Only take prescription medication exactly as prescribed
- Never let anyone else take your medication
- Keep track of how many pills you have at all times
- Report missing pills to the police
- Closely supervise children's use of prescription medication
- Discard old or unused pills by removing them from the original packaging, mixing the pills with an undesirable substance such as kitty litter, placing the mixture in a disposable container with a lid, and putting the sealed container in the trash
- Remove personal information from prescription containers before discarding, especially if there are refills remaining
- Get help immediately if you feel you are becoming addicted to prescription medications
- Talk to your children about the dangers of prescription drugs
- Encourage your doctor to use alternatives to prescription drugs or to prescribe drugs in small quantities



ASK YOUR DOCTOR

- Can this issue be handled with over-the-counter medication?
- Are there alternatives to medication, such as dietary supplements or physical therapy?
- What is the minimum strength that will be effective?
- Can you prescribe a small amount and schedule a follow-up appointment so we can talk about whether it's working?
- How long will I actually need to take this medication?
- Is this medication addictive?
- Can I stop taking this medication at once, or should I step down the dose gradually?
- What do I do if I have medication left over?

*a message from
Lapeer County Prosecutor
Byron Konschuh*



*paid for by drug forfeiture
funds
printed by Village Printing*



Prescription Drugs

The United States uses more prescription drugs per capita than any other country in the world.¹ Although Americans account for less than 5% of the world's population, they use 80% of the world's painkillers.²

Prescription drugs can be very beneficial. However, because they are legal, easily accessible, and prescribed by healthcare professionals, people often wrongly believe that they are completely safe and non-addictive. Instead, prescription drugs can effect the brain in the same way and carry the same risks as illegal drugs.

Prescription Drug Abuse

Abuse of prescription medications is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States.³ More Americans are addicted to prescription painkillers than to any other drug besides marijuana.⁴ Prescription drugs are also the leading cause of fatal overdoses, with an average of 100 Americans dying each day.⁵

Many people become addicted after using the drugs recreation-

ally for the high that they produce. However, many people become addicted to drugs prescribed for them.

How are These Drugs Abused?

Prescription drugs are commonly swallowed or ground into a powder and snorted. A person addicted to these drugs builds up a tolerance, needing more and more to get the same high. Users may mix different medications, or take pills without knowing what they are. Prescription drug abuse often leads to abuse of other drugs.

What are the Risks?

Health risks are different depending on the drug. Painkillers like Vicodin can cause drowsiness, constipation, and slowed or stopped breathing. Use of depressants like Xanax may result in seizures, difficulty breathing, and decreased heart rate. Stimulants can cause high body temperature, irregular heart rate, and heart failure.

Abuse of prescription drugs alone, or when mixed with alcohol or other drugs, may result in overdose, which can cause lasting injury or even death.



Who Abuses Prescription Drugs?

People of all ages and walks of life abuse prescription drugs. The highest rates of abuse are in people between the ages of 18 and 25, although many teens experiment with prescription drugs before they leave high school.⁶ Elderly persons are also at high risk of abuse because they are prescribed significant numbers of drugs.

COMMONLY ABUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Painkillers

- Codeine (*Tylenol #3, #4*)
- Hydrocodone (*Vicodin, Lorcet*)
- Meperidine (*Demerol*)
- Methadone
- Morphine (*Kadian, Avinza*)
- Oxycodone (*OxyContin, Percocet*)

Depressants (used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders)

- Alprazolam (*Xanax*)
- Barbituates (*Tuinal, Nembutal*)
- Clonazepam (*Klonopin*)
- Lorazepam (*Ativan*)
- Diazepam (*Valium*)
- Zolpidem (*Ambien*)

Stimulants (used to treat ADHD)

- Dextroamphetamine (*Dexedrine, Adderall*)
- Methylphenidate (*Ritalin, Concerta*)

¹Extent and causes of international variations in drug usage: a report for the Secretary of State for Health, 2010.
²American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians, 2010.
³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012.
⁴National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2010.
⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011.
⁶Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, 2006.

INDICATORS OF ADDICTION

- You have built up a tolerance to the drug
- You take the drug for reasons other than why it was prescribed
- You take the drug to avoid withdrawal symptoms
- You use the drug more than planned, or in increasing doses
- You continue to use the drug after negative consequences
- You use the drug under dangerous conditions, such as driving

FOR INFORMATION & HELP

Thumb Alliance PIHP Access to Services

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OR

(810) 987-6911

TTY (888) 225-1973

www.scccmh.org/thumballiance

L.A.D.S. Drug Testing

(810) 664-5247

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

(800) 662-4357

Families Against Narcotics

(810) 667-0119

FamiliesAgainstNarcotics.org