

Health Tips

Your Good Health Information From eDocAmerica

with

Dr. D




Health Tip: Prescription Medications, Teen's Drugs of Choice

The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently reported that current illegal drug use has declined among the nation's adolescents. Notably, the level of current marijuana use among youth ages 12 to 17 had declined significantly from 8.2 percent in 2002 to 6.7 percent in 2006. Although teens appeared to be turning away from street drugs, a new threat has appeared, coming from the family's medicine cabinet. Misuse of prescription drugs among young adults increased from 5.4 percent in 2002 to 6.4 percent in 2006, due largely to an increase in the use of pain relievers. In 2006, more than 2.1 million teens ages 12 to 17 reported abusing prescription drugs and among 12- and 13-year-olds, prescription drugs are the drug of choice.



What types of drugs are most likely to be abused? Painkillers such as Tylenol with Codeine, Vicodin and Percocet are the most commonly abused prescription medications. Additionally, depressants, such as sleeping pills or anti-anxiety drugs; and stimulants, such as those drugs prescribed for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are highly abused. Teens are also abusing over-the-counter drugs, such as cough and cold remedies.

Why are teens using prescription drugs? Like with street drugs, prescription and OTC drugs are often abused by teens to get high. Interestingly, there are other reasons mentioned by teens. Some take these drugs to help manage stress, depression or anxiety. Others take them to deal with pressures of life. Teens also report they are abusing these drugs to self-medicate, in order to do things like relieve pain or sleep better.

Where are teens obtaining prescription drugs? Perhaps not surprisingly, 70% of the pain relievers abused are obtained from a relative or friend. Keeping pain killers or tranquilizers in a medicine cabinet or kitchen counter at home is often an invitation to experimentation. Over-the-counter (OTC) medications, such as cough and cold remedies are widely available and can be purchased at supermarkets, drugstores, and convenience stores. The narcotic analogue, dextromethorphan (DXM) as well as the stimulants, ephedrine and phenylpropranolamine are some of the drugs that teens are seeking in OTC medications.



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Overview

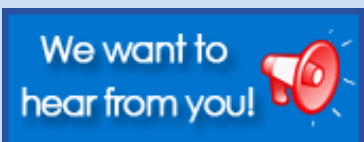
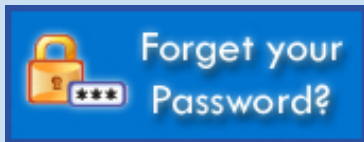



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What can be done about this problem? The following are tips from the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign for preventing prescription drug abuse:

1. Safeguard all drugs at home. Monitor quantities and control access.
2. Set clear rules for teens about all drug use, including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider's advice and dosages.
3. Be a good role model by following these same rules with your own medicines
4. Properly conceal and dispose of old or unused medicines in the trash
5. Ask friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs as well.

For more information on specific drugs being abused by teens, ways of detecting substance abuse and advice for dealing with suspected drug use, go to [Parents. The Anti-Drug.](#)

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