

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION



Prescription Drug Misuse

Myths vs Facts



What is it?

Misuse of prescription drugs means taking a medication in a manner or dose other than prescribed; taking someone else's prescription, even if for a legitimate medical complaint such as pain, or taking a medication to get high.

Source: *Misuse of Prescription Drugs*, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Did You Know?

Prescription (RX) drugs are the most commonly misused substances by teens after marijuana and alcohol.

Source: <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/prescription-drugs>

In 2016, 12 percent of high school seniors used a prescription drug non-medically in the past year.

Source: *University of Michigan, 2016 Monitoring the Future Study*, www.monitoringthefuture.org

Myth: It is safer to use prescription drugs to get high rather than using illegal drugs, because they are prescribed by a doctor or dentist and dispensed by a pharmacist.

Fact: Any use of prescription drugs without a doctor's recommendation can be as dangerous as using illegal drugs. Improper use can have serious health effects, including addiction and overdose.

Commonly misused prescription drugs fall under 3 categories:

- Opioids—Painkillers like Vicodin® or codeine
- Depressants—Used to relieve anxiety or help someone sleep, like Valium® or Xanax®
- Stimulants—Used for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), like Adderall® or Ritalin®

What are the health effects?

- Misusing opioids can cause severe respiratory depression or death and can be addictive.
- Misusing depressants can cause sleepiness, impaired mental functioning, blurred vision, and can be addictive.
- Misusing stimulants can cause irregular heart-beat, paranoia, high fever, and can be addictive.

Did you know?

- Some teens use Adderall® and Ritalin® to boost their test performance to improve their grades. Studies show that these stimulants do not help learning when used by persons who do not have ADHD.

Source: www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/stimulant-adhd-medications-methylphenidate-amphetamines

- Misusing prescription opioid painkillers, like OxyContin® and Vicodin®, may lead to heroin use. Heroin is cheaper and easier to obtain and produces a similar high.

- Can you die from prescription drug misuse? **YES!**

The majority of drug overdose deaths (more than six out of ten) involve an opioid.

Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose

Remember:

- Most teens who misuse prescription drugs get them free from a friend, relative, or the family medicine cabinet.
- Talk to your teen about the harmful effects of misusing prescription drugs not prescribed to them.
- Store prescribed medications in a locked cabinet.
- Dispose of medications properly to avoid harm to others.

Visit: <https://go.usa.gov/xR7vT>

For drug prevention information, visit DEA's websites:



GetSmartAboutDrugs.com

For parents, caregivers, and educators

JustThinkTwice.com

For teens

CampusDrugPrevention.gov

For college students

dea.gov

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