



Teen prescription drug misuse

More teens now abuse prescription medicines than ever before. It's important to know the facts and the signs of abuse. It's also important to learn what you can do and where to get help.

Factsⁱ

- One in four teens has misused or abused a prescription drug at least once in their life. That is a 33 percent increase since 2008.
- One out of three teens agree with the following statement: "It's okay to use prescription drugs that were not prescribed to me."
- Forty-three percent of teens say prescription drugs are easier to get than street drugs.
- Four out of 10 teens who have misused a drug got it from their parents' medicine cabinet.

Signs of abuse

Personal appearance

- Messy, lack of caring for appearance
- Poor hygiene
- Red, flushed cheeks or face
- Smaller eye pupils, frequent use of eye drops
- Needle marks
- Unusual smells on breath, body or clothing

Personal habits or actions

- Often breaks curfew
- Cash flow problems
- Avoids eye contact
- Locked doors
- Secretive phone calls
- Dropping one group of friends for another

School- or work-related issues

- Truancy or loss of interest in schoolwork

- Loss of interest in outside activities, hobbies or sports
- Failure to fulfill duties at school or work

Behavioral issues

- Change in relations with family members or friends
- Loss of self-control
- Mood changes such as seeming cranky and/or angry
- Sullen, withdrawn, depressed
- Often tired, may sometimes "nod off"
- Slurred speech
- Confusion
- Problems with attention and memory
- Taking money, valuables or prescribed medicines from home
- Periods of high activity or distress
- Seems slow or spaced out
- Sudden poor judgment or reckless behavior

Health issues

- Frequent sickness
 - Queasy, nauseous
 - Sudden or dramatic weight loss or gain
 - Accidents or injuries
 - Sweatiness
 - Constipation, increased use of laxatives
 - Periods of passing out
 - Runny nose or nose sores
-

What you can do

- Talk to your kids about the dangers of taking prescription drugs.
- Use blocks of time to talk about drugs. This could be after dinner, before bedtime, or driving to activities. Explain how drugs are harmful.
- Find everyday “teachable moments.” This could be during commercials, with celebrity news, etc. Point out things you’d like your child to know about.
- Safely store medicines in your home, and then properly dispose of them.

Resources

The Partnership at Drugfree.org

Provides resources for teen drug use and addiction. This is to help parents prevent and act on their children’s drug use. The Partnership helps people find treatment.

drugfree.org or 1-855-378-4373

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Helps people find treatment programs for drug and alcohol abuse.

findtreatment.samhsa.gov or 1-800-662-HELP

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Wants people to be able to find safe treatment options. The CDC website has a section on opioid information and FAQs.

cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/patients.html

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

Provides information about drugs that are often abused. This includes the latest science and treatments. It also includes trends and statistics.

drugabuse.gov

The American Society of Addiction Medicine

Helps people get better access to addiction care. They offer a national listing of addiction medicine experts.

asam.org

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Healthcare does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.

¹ 2013 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, *Teens and Parents*. Sponsored by The Partnership At Drugfree.org and the MetLife Foundation. Released April 23, 2014.