



**DEA**  
Drug  
Enforcement  
Administration



**Elks  
National  
Drug  
Awareness  
Program**

# PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE



## Myths vs Facts

### **What is it?**

When someone takes a medication prescribed for someone else, takes their own prescription in a way not intended by a doctor or dentist, or takes a medication to get high.

**Source:** [www.nida.gov](http://www.nida.gov)

**Did you know?** Prescription (RX) drugs are the most commonly abused substances by teens after marijuana and alcohol. **Source:** University of Michigan, 2014 Monitoring the Future Study, [www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org)

In 2014, 13.9% of high school seniors used a prescription drug non-medically in the past year.

**Source:** University of Michigan, 2014 Monitoring the Future Study, [www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://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 abused prescription drugs fall under 3 categories:

- Opioids--Painkillers like Vicodin®, OxyContin®, or codeine
- Central Nervous System 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?

- Abusing opioids can cause severe respiratory depression or death and can be addictive.
- Abusing depressants can cause sleepiness, impaired mental functioning, blurred vision, and can be addictive.
- Abusing stimulants can cause irregular heartbeat, paranoia, high body temperatures and can be addictive.

## Did you know?

Some teens use Adderall® or 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](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/stimulant-adhd-medications-methylphenidate-amphetamines)

Abusing 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 abuse?

YES, more than half of all drug overdoses in the United States is from the abuse of prescription drugs. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. <http://wonder.cdc.gov>

### Remember:

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

For additional information about disposing of unused medicine visit: [www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers](http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers)

**FOR MORE DRUG PREVENTION INFORMATION, VISIT:**

Elks



[www.elks.org](http://www.elks.org)

DEA



[www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov)

GetSmartAboutDrugs.com



*For parents*

JustThinkTwice.com



*For teens*