

## Prescription Drug Abuse

**One in 4 teens** report that they have taken a prescription medication that was not prescribed for them by a doctor, for the purpose of getting high or for any other reason.

Help to reverse this disturbing trend **right now.**

Most teens say they get their hands on prescription drugs from the homes of friends and relatives. In fact, access to medications can be as easy as opening a medicine cabinet, drawer or kitchen cupboard in a teen's own home or a relative's house.

Any abuse of drugs-be they illicit, prescription, or over-the-counter-is highly unsafe. Many teens, however, mistakenly believe that using prescription drugs to get high is safer than taking illegal drugs like cocaine or heroin.

## Commonly Abused Medications

**Opioids-** Medication commonly known as prescription painkillers

Repeated use can lead to addiction

Taking a large single dose can cause severe respiratory depression that can lead to death

**Stimulants-** Such as medications that treat Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Repeated use of some stimulants over a short period can lead to feelings of hostility or paranoia

High does may result in a dangerously high temperature and an irregular heartbeat

Potential for heart failure or seizures

Combining stimulants and over-the-counter cold medicines with decongestants may cause dangerously high blood pressure and an irregular heart rhythm

**Sedatives-** Such as anti-anxiety and sleep-disorder medications

Slowed brain activity can result in sleepiness and lack of coordination during first days of taking depressants

Continued use can lead to dependence

Use with alcohol can be fatal.

## **TAKE ACTION NOW**

### **CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

Properly dispose of unused or expired medications

Secure all prescription medications in a safe place

Educate family and friends (especially Grandparents)

**NOTICE COMMON SIGNS OF ABUSE**

Physical and psychological changes

Changes in academic performance

Pills missing from the medicine cabinet

**TALK TO YOUR TEENS**

Be open and non-judgmental

Communicate regularly

Talk about danger of prescription drug abuse