

Prescription Drug Abuse

What Is Prescription Drug Abuse?

Prescription drug abuse is the use of prescription medicine without a doctor's prescription in a way other than prescribed, or for the feeling it produces. Prescription drug abuse is dangerous because it can lead to other forms of drug abuse as well as accidents, injuries, overdoses, and even death.

What Are Prescription Drugs?

A prescription drug is a drug (medicine) that requires a doctor's prescription and must be obtained from a pharmacy. The prescription includes the instructions to the patient on the proper use of the drug (how much to take, when and how often to take it, and how long to take it). Other drugs (medicines) that are taken without a prescription are known as over-the-counter (OTC) drugs.

Prescription drugs can have side effects. A side effect is an undesirable result from taking a drug. Side effects can be mild and uncomfortable to severe.

Contraindicated means that there is a medical reason someone should not take a prescription drug. For example, a person might have an allergy to an ingredient in it or it may be dangerous if taken with another drug a person may already be taking.

Commonly Abused Prescription Drugs

Three commonly abused prescription drugs are stimulants, sedatives, and pain relievers (including a class of drugs called opioids).

Stimulants are prescribed by doctors to treat a variety of conditions including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Stimulants increase the levels of certain chemicals in the brain and body.

Sedatives are prescribed by doctors to treat conditions like anxiety, panic attacks, or sleep disorders. Sedatives slow down the mind and body.

Pain relievers are prescribed by doctors to relieve severe pain and physical discomfort. Pain relievers interrupt pain signals so that people don't feel as much pain. Opioids are a commonly prescribed pain reliever.

Getting a Grip on Reality

Myth	Reality
1 It's safer to use prescription medications than street drugs like heroin and cocaine.	Prescription drug abuse can be just as dangerous as using street drugs.
2 Prescription drugs can make people feel good.	Prescription drugs can make people feel better, but they can also make people feel terrible.
3 Using someone else's prescription medications can help you get better grades in school.	Teens who use someone else's prescription drugs often have lower grades than those who do not.

Tips for Resisting Peer Pressure

- 1 **Eye contact:** Look directly into the person's eyes. Don't look away from the person you are talking to or down at the floor.
- 2 **Facial expression:** Be certain that your facial expressions match what you are saying (for example, don't smile while telling someone you're angry).
- 3 **Body position/posture:** Face the person to whom you are speaking, and stand up straight. Slouching will make the person think you don't believe what you're saying.
- 4 **Distance:** Stand a comfortable distance from the person (generally about three feet).

My Reasons for Not Abusing Prescription Drugs

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