

Prescription Drug Misuse In Teens



- When these drugs are misused by teens, they can have serious side effects and can lead to a fatal overdose.
- These drugs are easily accessible to teens through medical facilities, in their community, and through their social network.
- Common signs a teen is misusing prescription drugs include changes in their physical health, social interactions, school performance, and in their overall behaviors.

Prescription drugs are drugs that are only available through a pharmacist with authorization from a healthcare provider. Misuse of prescription drugs occurs when a person takes a medication in a manner other than prescribed, takes someone else's medication or takes a medication to feel euphoria.

These are the most frequently misused type of drug by teenagers after vaping, marijuana and alcohol. Therefore, it is important for caring adults to recognize the signs of prescription drug misuse by teens and intervene as soon as possible. Misuse of prescription drugs can have extreme side effects including overdose, which can be fatal.

They are addictive. They are easy to access. They are dangerous. They can be obtained legally, and illegally.

Most Misused Types Of Prescription Drugs

Opioids: These medications are primarily used to relieve pain and dull the senses. They can be prescribed for pain relief after surgery, to alleviate chronic pain, and for managing pain associated with terminal cancer. Examples of opioids include Vicodin, Oxycontin, and Codeine.

Depressants: These are used to relieve anxiety by slowing down brain activity, to reduce stress or to help someone sleep. These are also used for sedation and muscle relaxation. Examples of depressants include benzodiazepines such as Valium or Xanax.

Stimulants: These are used for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), narcolepsy, obesity and occasionally treatment-resistant depression. Examples of stimulants include Adderall, Ritalin and Ionamin.

Adverse Effects Of Prescription Drugs

All three types of these prescription drugs can be highly addictive and may lead to severe negative effects on the human body.

Opioids	Depressants	Stimulants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drowsiness and mental confusion• Constipation and nausea• Skin, lung, and brain abscesses• Endocarditis and Hepatitis• Slowed breathing which can lead to severe respiratory depression• Overdose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleepiness, vivid and disturbing dreams• Impaired mental functioning, disorientation, and impaired memory• Clammy skin and dilated pupils• Blurred vision, slurred speech and shallow respiration• Overdose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irregular heartbeat and an increase in blood pressure and pulse rates.• Fatigue and depression• Loss of appetite• Agitation, paranoia, hallucinations and insomnia• Convulsions, coma, and heart failure• Overdose



Wheeler

CONNECTICUT
Clearinghouse
a program of the Connecticut Center
for Prevention, Wellness and Recovery

800.232.4424 (phone)
www.ctclearinghouse.org

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

Why Do Teens Misuse Prescription Drugs?

- To improve performance in sports and other physical activities
- To get high - this is more common in teenage boys
- To lose weight - this is more common in teenage girls
- To boost their test performance in school.
- General curiosity and peer pressure
- To alleviate their stress and anxiety

Where Do Teens Get These Drugs?

Medical & Related Facilities	Doctors' offices, hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, and online pharmacies.
Their Community	Schools, gyms, stores, online, on the street, medicine cabinets, and other locations in their homes.
Social Network	Relatives, friends, classmates, teammates, gym trainers, coaches, and social media.

Due to teens having access to these drugs at home, it is important to safely store and dispose of prescription drugs. Free lockboxes and safe disposal kits can be ordered at drugfreect.org.

Signs A Teenager Is Misusing Prescription Drugs

Physical Signs: They act sluggish and may have problems with their sleeping patterns. Their cheeks and eyes may appear red, and their pupils may look constricted. They may have burns around their fingers and mouth. They may also experience chronic nosebleeds.

Changes In Behavior: They spend an abnormal amount of time alone. They frequently break curfew with no reasonable explanation. They have trouble focusing on things and begin to lack any motivation. In addition, they are more secretive about who they interact with and where they go.

Problems At School: They frequently skip classes and miss school. They have many overdue homework and class assignments. Their grades may begin to falter. They also may show a lack of interest in school, after-school activities, and their grades.

Changes In Friends: They no longer interact with childhood friends. Instead, they may socialize with kids older than them and act secretive about who these new friends are.

Appearance: They may show a lack of interest in their appearance and begin to neglect it. Their grooming and clothing will start to worsen.

Financial Problems: They may try to steal money from wallets at home or from other easy to access places. They may start selling things from home, including their own personal items. They may also start pressuring people for money as well.

Drug Paraphernalia: Their personal spaces, clothing, and other items may start to have imagery, words and references to drug use. Furthermore, while some types of drug paraphernalia are easy to recognize, others are everyday household items such as spoons, rolled up pieces of paper or aerosol cans.

Where To Find Help In Connecticut

For information regarding teenagers' misuse of prescription drugs, and how to get help with this issue, please call 2-1-1, or visit www.211ct.org.

Connecticut Resources

CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

www.ct.gov/DMHAS

24/7 Access Line

1.800.563.4086

2-1-1 of Connecticut

www.211ct.org or call 2-1-1

Drug Free CT

www.drugfreect.org

National Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

www.samhsa.gov

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

www.nida.nih.gov