



A Prescription For Trouble

Prescription medications, when used correctly and under a doctor's supervision, are safe and effective. But abuse them, or mix them with other drugs or alcohol and you could end up in serious trouble. According to the latest national study by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, about one in five teenagers have admitted to abusing a prescription medication.

Some of the most common prescription drugs that today's teens are abusing or misusing are Ritalin, Adderall, Dexedrine, Valium, Seconal, Xanax, OxyContin, Percocet, Demerol and Vicodin. Teens often call these drugs by their street names: coties, demmies, hillbilly heroin, o.c., oxy, percs, vics, pharming, vitamin R.

Many of these substances are highly addictive. Users quickly build a tolerance to these drugs, meaning they have to take a larger amount to feel the same effects. Meanwhile, user's bodies become dependent on the drug, and if they try to stop, they will feel any number of negative effects like vomiting, diarrhea or sleeplessness. This is called withdrawal. Tolerance, dependence, and withdrawal are the three signs of addiction.

Overdose is a real danger with any prescription medication. Taking too much of any of these drugs can kill a person. Some of the symptoms of overdose are slow breathing, confusion, nodding off or passing out, dizziness, weakness, nausea, cold and clammy skin, and seizures.

Parents need to know what medication and how much is available in their own home and keep those medications in a safe place away from children. If you suspect that your child may be abusing prescription medications or any other drug contact your mental health provider or call the Oakland County Health Division Office of Substance Abuse Services at 248-858-0001.

