



# FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

A Resource Guide to Educate Parents and the Community on the  
Facts About Prescription Drug Abuse and Misuse.



RxSAFETYMATTERS®

# OVERVIEW

Seventy percent of people 12 and older who abuse prescription drugs say they get them from a friend or relative. Parents can have a powerful impact in deterring and intervening in teen drug abuse.

In this resource guide you will find:

- Facts & Figures
- Drug Abuse Signs & Symptoms
- Tips for Parents
- Methods for Safe Storage & Disposal
- Resources for Getting Treatment
- Community Resources

## FACTS & FIGURES ABOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Prescription drug abuse **IS STILL DRUG ABUSE**. Get the facts:

- More than 2,000 teens begin abusing prescription drugs each day.<sup>1</sup>
- Many kids believe prescription drugs are safer to abuse than illegal drugs.<sup>2</sup>
- After marijuana, the most common drugs teens are using to get high are prescription medications.<sup>1</sup>
- 12-17 year olds abuse prescription drugs more than ecstasy, heroin, crack/cocaine and methamphetamines combined.<sup>1</sup>
- More than 70% of people 12 and older who abuse prescription drugs say they get them from a friend or relative.<sup>1</sup>
- The most commonly abused prescription drugs are pain medications, sleeping pills, anti-anxiety medications and stimulants (used to treat attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders).<sup>1</sup>
- As many as 1 in every 5 teens in America has taken a prescription drug that was not prescribed for them.<sup>3</sup>
- Two-thirds of teens who abuse prescription drugs did so before the age of 16.<sup>2</sup>
- 14% of teens (about 1 in 7) in a recent study reported using prescription pain relievers not prescribed for them in the past year, and 9% (about 1 in 11) reported doing so in the past month.<sup>2</sup>
- Thousands of rogue websites selling prescription drug products do not require a valid prescription.

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1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings, NSDUH Series H-44, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 12-4713. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012.

2. 2010 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, April 6, 2011.

3. Preventing Teen Abuse Prescription Drugs FACT SHEET, 2010, The Partnership at DrugFree.org.

# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

## IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ABUSE:

- Loss of interest in appearance, sports or social activities
- Cash, valuables or medication missing from the home
- Sudden mood changes
- Changes in friends
- Deceitful and secretive behavior
- Irregular schedule
- Sleeping excessively or at atypical times
- Noticeable increase in snoring

# TIPS FOR PARENTS

## WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT?

- Educate yourself
- Be more aware
- Keep medications in safe place
- Monitor your medications—you'll find our Medicine Inventory Sheet at the end of this resource guide
- Dispose of old or unused medications properly
- Spread the word
- Spend time with your teen and get to know their friends and their friends' parents
- Reinforce positive behaviors
- Be aware of online activity
- Most importantly—talk to your children!

## MAKE SURE YOUR CHILDREN KNOW THE FOLLOWING:

- Taking ANY prescription medication that is not prescribed to them by a doctor is drug abuse and it is dangerous.
- Medications are powerful drugs that can be very beneficial when taken properly under a doctor's supervision, but experimenting with prescription drugs—even once—can lead to an overdose or death. Explain that these risks increase dramatically when drugs and/or alcohol are mixed.
- Find out what they already know—what they've heard, what they've learned at school and what their friends are saying.

- Set clear standards and expectations around ALL types of substance abuse, including abuse of prescription medications. Family rules about drugs give kids something to fall back on when they are tempted to make poor decisions.

If you know or suspect that your child is abusing drugs, find out what you can do to intervene. Visit Drugfree.org's Time to Act website at: <http://timetoact.drugfree.org>.

If you need help, visit The Partnership at Drugfree.org's Time to Get Help website at: <http://timetogethelp.drugfree.org>.

## MONITORING ONLINE ACTIVITY

Whether or not to monitor a child's online activity is a personal decision for parents. However, parents need to know that prescription drugs can be bought over the internet, both from legitimate online pharmacies and from rogue sites that operate outside of the law.

In fact, here are some sobering facts about rogue internet pharmacies:

- 95% online pharmacies are operating illegally\*
- 94% of websites do not have a named verifiable pharmacist\*
- More than 90% of websites supply prescription medications without a prescription\*
- Approximately 50% of medications purchased online are counterfeit (World Health Organization)

\* The European Alliance to Access Safe Medicines Jan 6, 2008.

The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy® (NABP) reviewed more than 10,000 websites selling prescription medications and found that 97 percent were operating out of compliance with state and federal laws and/or NABP patient safety and pharmacy practice standards. These Not Recommended sites are listed on NABP's AWARxE consumer protection website at [www.awarerx.org](http://www.awarerx.org).

If you want to buy a medicine online, look to see if the pharmacy is accredited by the NABP VIPPS® (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice SitesCM) program. These Recommended Sites are also listed on the AWARxE website at [www.awarerx.org/VIPPS\\_Pharmacies.php](http://www.awarerx.org/VIPPS_Pharmacies.php).

Purdue Pharma L.P. also regularly monitors the internet to identify rogue internet pharmacies and websites offering to sell controlled substances directly to consumers. Since 2010, the company's efforts have helped to shut down thousands of illegal or infringing sites.

# SAFE STORAGE & DISPOSAL

Learning how to properly store and dispose of prescription medication can help prevent them from falling into the wrong hands.



## PROPER STORAGE

Safeguard My Meds, a national educational program from the National Community Pharmacists Association and Purdue Pharma outlines a set of do's and don'ts for safe medication storage.

Safeguard My Meds also provides a downloadable resource for parents: "A Parent's Guide to Understanding Prescription Drug Abuse."

Learn more at [www.safeguardmymeds.org](http://www.safeguardmymeds.org).



## DISPOSING OF MEDICATIONS

Drug take-back programs—offered by law enforcement, pharmacies, government agencies, and community organizations—are available in some states and communities, as are regularly scheduled drug take-back events. Additional information about such programs is available in the Medication Disposal section of the NABP AWAxE website.

The U.S. Food & Drug administration provides useful guidance to consumers on how to properly dispose of unneeded medications.

Learn more at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).

# GETTING TREATMENT

## GETTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT SERVICES

Many people don't know where to turn when seeking substance abuse treatment services. Here are some resources that can provide information on finding information.



## THE PARTNERSHIP AT DRUGFREE.ORG'S TIME TO GET HELP

The Partnership at Drugfree.org (formerly the Partnership for a Drug-Free America) has launched Time to Get Help, an online resource for parents who are seeking substance abuse treatment for their child.

## THE PARTNERSHIP AT DRUGFREE.ORG'S TOLL-FREE HELPLINE

The Partnership also operates a bilingual, toll-free helpline (1-855-DRUGFREE) staffed by substance abuse experts who can provide advice to parents and other individuals seeking information and assistance in getting substance abuse treatment for a family member.

If you need help, visit The Partnership at Drugfree.org's (The Partnership) Time to Get Help website at: <http://timetogethelp.drugfree.org>.



## SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA)

Part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA provides programs, resources and financial support for the prevention and treatment of alcohol and substance abuse. SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment offers a toll free number (800-662-HELP or 800-662-4357) and an online resource, the Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator to help families and individuals struggling with substance abuse find treatment programs in their communities. Another source of information on treatment services may be your state or county's department of health.

For more information, visit SAMHSA at [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES



### THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION'S HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM

The American Medical Association Foundation's Healthy Living Program provides funding for community efforts to combat prescription drug abuse.

For more information, please visit [www.amafoundation.org](http://www.amafoundation.org).



### THE PARTNERSHIP FOR DRUGFREE.ORG

The Partnership at Drugfree.org works with parents and other influencers to help them prevent and get help for drug and alcohol abuse by teens and young adults. Drugfree.org programs include:

- Time to Act, a science-based multimedia resource to help parents intervene when they see signs of drug or alcohol use in their children.
- Time to Get Help, a resource that helps parents find treatment for their children struggling with drug abuse.

- Parent's Toll Free Helpline, a call center manned by substance abuse experts who can provide advice to parents and other individuals seeking information and assistance in getting substance abuse treatment for a family member.

For more information, please visit [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org).



## THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION HEALTH INFORMATION NETWORK (NEA HIN)

The National Education Association Health Information Network (NEA HIN) provides health and safety information to the over 3 million educational employees served by NEA and their 43 million students. NEA HIN distributes information nationally through NEA's 51 state/territory affiliates as well as through its almost 15,000 local education associations. NEA HIN programs include:

- Rx For Understanding, an educational resource on prescription drug abuse and misuse which includes 10 cross-curricular lessons for middle students. Aligned with the National Health Education Standards and Common Core State Standards, the lessons aim to equip students with the understanding and decision-making skills they need to recognize and avoid the dangers of misusing and abusing prescription drugs.

For more information, please visit [www.neahin.org](http://www.neahin.org).



## THE COMMUNITY ANTI-DRUG COALITIONS OF AMERICA (CADCA)

The Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), is a national non-profit organization that works to strengthen the capacity of community-based anti-drug coalitions in their effort to create and maintain safe, healthy and drug-free communities. CADCA programs include:

- National Leadership Forum, the largest substance abuse prevention conference in the nation.
- Mid-Year Training Institute, the only intensive, coalition-specific training program of its kind, designs to help coalition leaders effectively address their local drug problems and achieve population-level change.
- Drug Free Kids Campaign, which raises funds to support CADCA's mission.
- National Youth Leadership Initiative, a youth leadership and workforce development program that trains youth leaders to be strategic community problem solvers around drug issues.

For more information, please visit [www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org).

Through an educational grant from Purdue, CADCA has developed an online course on over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription drug abuse prevention. "Applying the Strategic Prevention Framework to Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention" addresses prescription and OTC medicine misuse, abuse and addiction. Individuals and other concerned health advocates can access the courses at [learning.cadca.org](http://learning.cadca.org).



## THE COSHAR FOUNDATION

The COSHAR Foundation, a nonprofit health education and awareness foundation working in partnership with the faith community and community organizations, has launched a prescription abuse awareness campaign, called "Safe Meds."

For more information, please visit [www.cosharfoundation.org](http://www.cosharfoundation.org).



## THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PATIENT INFORMATION AND EDUCATION (NCPIE)

The National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) works to advance the safe, appropriate user of medicines through enhanced communication. NCPIE promotes "Maximizing Your Role as a Teen Influencer: What You Can Do to Help Prevent Teen Prescription Drug Abuse."

For more information, please visit [www.talkaboutrx.org](http://www.talkaboutrx.org).



## THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

The U.S. Conference of Mayors promotes and awareness and educational campaign in municipalities around the country to encourage safe storage and disposal of medications in the home.

The campaign includes print, radio and TV ads and PSAs, which can be tailored for use by community groups around the country.

For more information, please visit [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org).