

Talking About Prescription Drug Abuse & Misuse

Prescription drug abuse and misuse occurs when ANY prescription medication is used in a way NOT intended by your doctor.^{1,2}

Such as...

- ▶ Using a friend's migraine medication, even if it's the same brand or strength as your usual prescription
- ▶ Taking a larger dose of pain medication because the pain feels worse
- ▶ Taking sleeping pills to take the edge off
- ▶ Snorting or injecting crushed pills instead of swallowing them



Surprisingly, prescription drug abuse and misuse usually doesn't start on the street, it starts at home!

In 2020, a reported 20,600,000 people aged 12 or older misused prescription pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives at least once in the past year.³



Prescription medications most often abused or misused:^{1,2,3}

- 🔑 Opioid pain relievers
 - 🔑 Sedatives for sleep disorders/anxiety
 - 🔑 Stimulants for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Make sure you pay careful attention when storing these drugs

Situations that can lead to prescription drug abuse or misuse:¹

Using a prescription drug...



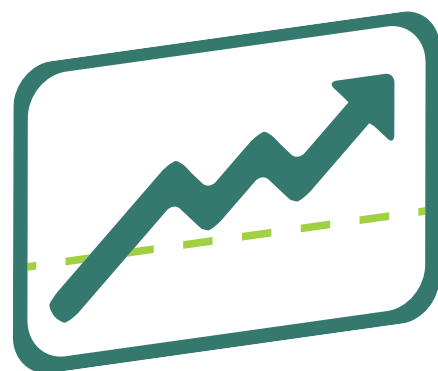
Too often or not enough

May happen due to not following the doctor's orders. Some people might fear becoming addicted and avoid taking their medications altogether. This could backfire and create a greater need for the drug, which can lead to addiction.



To escape or relax

If people have access to drugs prescribed for someone else, and they've heard that the medication can make people feel better, they may try the drug for themselves.



For performance-enhancement

Some people take drugs that they believe will make them perform better at certain tasks. For example, students hoping a drug will help them do well on a test, or an athlete looking to perform at a higher level.



That is readily available and not securely stored away from others

Any drugs that people allow friends and family to take can easily be abused. Do not, under any circumstances, share your prescription medications with others. It's also possible for prescription drugs to be stolen by guests rummaging through your medicine cabinet.

Preventing Prescription Drug Abuse and Misuse^{4,5}

Create a dialogue

Whether one-on-one or in a group setting, starting a conversation is the first step.



Don't let past prescriptions accumulate

Get rid of any medication you don't need anymore. Learn more about [proper medicine disposal](#).



Talk to your doctor

Be open with your doctor about other medications you are taking. It is best to be sure which active ingredients are working in your medication to ensure they don't adversely react to any other medications you are taking. Also, don't stop or change your dosing regimen without first talking to your doctor.



Take control of your personal medications

People struggling with abuse can gain access to medications through people closest to them. Store medications in a locked cabinet, and keep track of how many of each medication you should have at any time.



We also encourage you to visit www.drugfree.org. This website contains information about fighting drug abuse, including the misuse of prescription drugs.

Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic staff. Prescription drug abuse. October 11, 2012. Available at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/prescription-drug-abuse/D501079>. Accessed December 13, 2021.

2. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Misuse of Prescription Drugs. Available at: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/misuse-prescription-drugs/overview> Accessed 12/13/2021.

3. SAMHSA's 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Available at: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt35325/2020NSDUHFRSlides090821.pdf>. Accessed December 13, 2021.

4. How to stop prescription drug abuse. <http://www.drugrehab.org/stop-prescription-drug-abuse/>. Accessed December 13, 2021.

5. Partnership™ for Drug-Free Kids. <https://drugfree.org/article/prevention-tips-for-every-age/>. Accessed December 13, 2021.

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