

Important Information for Parents

Regarding Prescription Pain Medication and Heroin

Facts

There is no greater influence on a young person's decisions about drug use than his/her own parents or guardians. To successfully keep kids drug-free, parents must provide active support and positive role-modeling.

Parents are key in preventing drug use. Be a parent, not a friend. Establish boundaries that take a clear stand against drug use.

Nationally, one in five teens has taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription one or more times in their life. (*MMWR June 8, 2012*)

Between 2007 and 2012, the number of individuals using heroin during the past 30 days more than doubled nationwide (161,000 to 335,000). (*NSDUH 2012*)

Current brain research shows that the brain is not fully developed until the mid-20s. Adding chemicals to a developing brain is a very risky endeavor—and one that can lead to health problems and places kids at high risk for addiction, even death.

The percentage of New York State high school students who reported using heroin more than doubled between 2005 and 2011 (1.8 % to 4%). (*Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)*)

You Should Know

- The majority of both teens and young adults obtain prescription drugs they abuse from friends and relatives, sometimes without their knowledge.
- Despite what many teens think, abusing prescription drugs is not safer than misusing illicit drugs.
- Prescription drugs can be addictive and lethal when misused.
- Prescription painkillers can lead to heroin use.
- Combining prescription drugs/over-the-counter medications and alcohol can cause respiratory failure and death.
- In 2011, nonmedical use of prescription drugs among youth ages 12 - 17 and young adults ages 18 - 25 was the second most prevalent illicit drug use category, with marijuana being first. (*NSDUH 2011*)

Why Teens Use

Acceptance

Teens use to fit in with friends, to become popular, or to be where the action is.

Curiosity

Youth hear about "highs" and want to find out for themselves.

Easy Access

If pills are easy to obtain, available within a household and not monitored, they are more likely to be used inappropriately.

Modeling

When parents or older siblings use alcohol, drugs and/or tobacco, youth are more likely to try.

Self-medication

To cope with pressures or problems or as an antidote to deal with issues. Medication is intended only for the person for whom it was prescribed. Never share medications. Misuse can lead to addiction and death.



Take Action

When you suspect your child may be using heroin or inappropriately using prescription painkillers, it is important to take action.

Prepare Yourself

Work with what happened rather than why it happened. Don't blame someone else, yourself or your child. Don't be shocked or judgmental, because there are many innovative ways to conceal use. Don't be afraid and/or hesitate to investigate your son/daughter's belongings such as cell phones, computers, etc.

Confront the Issue

Don't let anger or fear overwhelm your effectiveness in dealing with your child. Cool down or take a walk before you begin the conversation.

Have a Conversation

Putting your head in the sand is counterproductive. Accept that your son/daughter may be using so you can begin the conversation.

Set Standards

Take a stand. Say "NO" clearly and firmly. Carry through on consequences.

Ask For Help

There are many confidential resources available for parents—if you ask! Ask your school health professional for help, or seek assistance from a mental health or substance abuse counselor.

Signs and Symptoms

Any one of the following behaviors can be a symptom of normal adolescence. However, keep in mind that the key is change. It is important to note any significant changes in a child's physical appearance, personality, attitude or behavior.

Physical Signs

- Loss or increase in appetite; unexplained weight loss or gain
- Small pupils, decreased respiratory rate and a non-responsive state are all signs of opioid intoxication.
- Nausea, vomiting, sweating, shaky hands, feet or head, and large pupils are all signs of opioid withdrawal.

Behavioral Signs

- Change in attitude/personality
- Change in friends; new hangouts
- Avoiding contact with family
- Change in activities, hobbies or sports
- Drop in grades or work performance
- Isolation and secretive behavior
- Moodiness, irritability, nervousness, giddiness, nodding off
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts or layers of clothing out of season
- Stealing

Advanced Warning Signs

- Missing medications
- Burnt or missing spoons/ bottle caps
- Missing shoelaces/belts
- Small bags with powder residue
- Syringes

The following organizations offer information and resources that can help you and your family.



1-877-8-HOPENY

Find Help for **1-877-846-7369**
Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Problem Gambling



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New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
www.oasas.ny.gov



New York State Department of Health
www.health.ny.gov



www.combatheroin.ny.gov

Prescription Painkillers

Heroin

Marijuana

Alcohol

Tobacco

Widely Used Drugs

NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF ALCOHOLISM
AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

Prescription Drug Misuse

Most people take prescriptions responsibly under a doctor's care. However, there has been a steady increase in the nonmedical use of medications, especially by adolescents and young adults.

Prescription drug misuse occurs when a person takes a prescription medication that is not prescribed for him/her, or takes it for reasons or in dosages other than prescribed. The nonmedical use of prescription medications has increased in the past decade and has surpassed all illicit drugs except marijuana in the United States. Misuse of prescription drugs can produce serious health effects, including addiction.

Commonly misused prescription medications include those that are intended to relieve pain, anxiety and sleep disorders.

Why should you be concerned?

- Despite what many teens and adults think, abusing prescription drugs is not safer than misusing illicit drugs.
- Prescription drug misuse may begin with inappropriate prescribing or lack of patient compliance with medication regimens. Continued misuse may lead to abuse and dependence.
- Prescription painkillers can lead to addiction and heroin use.
- Federal Drug Abuse Warning Network data consistently shows the increasing involvement of prescription drugs in emergency department visits related to both drug misuse or abuse and adverse reactions.
- The percentage of New York State high school students who reported using heroin more than doubled between 2005 and 2011 (1.8 % to 4%). (*Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)*)
- Nationwide, the number of individuals using heroin during the past 30 days more than doubled between 2007 and 2012 (161,000 to 335,000). (*NSDUH 2012*)

Remember

- Prescription drug misuse is on the rise and has resulted in unintended drug addiction and death.
- Ask your provider if any of the medications prescribed for your family have a potential for abuse.
- Medication is intended only for the person for whom it was prescribed.
- Never share medications.
- Don't mix medications. Speak to your health care provider about all medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medications.
- Medications are unsafe when not taken as prescribed.
- Store all medications in one designated location, in a dry and cool place. The kitchen and bathroom are bad places to store medication because of heat and moisture.
- Be sure the medication location is safe and secure, away from children, adolescents and others.
- Routine tracking of all medication is a good idea, especially when others live with or visit you.
- Discuss the importance of safely using medications with family and friends.



Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicine Misuse

To download a useful tracking tool for your own medicine cabinet, visit www.combatheroin.ny.gov.

With this tool, you can list your prescriptions, the date filled, the expiration date, and original quantity. Once a week, count the pills remaining and mark the date.

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Is Your Medicine Cabinet Safe?

Prescription Painkillers, Medications and Over-the-Counter Medicine Abuse

Why you should be concerned

FACT: Among persons ages 12 or older who used pain relievers nonmedically in the past year, an estimated 70% obtained them from a friend or relative. *(NSDUH 2011)*

FACT: In 2011, nonmedical use of prescription drugs among youth and young adults ages 12 - 25 was the second most prevalent illicit drug use category, with marijuana being first. *(NSDUH 2011)*

FACT: According to the Federal Drug Abuse Warning Network, emergency room visits due to abuse of prescription drugs are greater than the number of visits due to abuse of marijuana and heroin combined.

FACT: Young adults ages 18-24 are particularly at risk, with increases in heroin/opioid treatment admissions throughout the state. In particular, upstate New York (222% increase in admissions) and Long Island (242% increase) have been hard hit by this problem. *(NYS Client Data System)*

FACT: Between 2007 and 2012, the number of individuals using heroin during the past 30 days more than doubled nationwide (161,000 to 335,000). *(NSDUH 2012)*

FACT: The percentage of New York State high school students who reported using heroin more than doubled between 2005 and 2011 (1.8 % to 4%). *Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)*

One of the most striking aspects of the misuse of prescription medications has been the increase in painkiller abuse, which can lead to heroin use. Prescription drug abuse is the use of prescription medication in a manner that is not prescribed by a health care practitioner. This includes using someone else's prescription or using your own prescription in a way not directed by your doctor.

Most people take prescription medication responsibly under a doctor's care. However, there has been a steady increase in the nonmedical use of these medications, especially by teenagers. Part of the problem is the availability of medications (over-the-counter and prescription) in the family medicine cabinet, which can provide easy access for children, adults, elderly and visitors. People often mistakenly believe these medications are safe because they are approved by the FDA and prescribed by a physician. Nonmedical use of certain prescription drugs can lead to addiction.

What you can do

Educate Yourself

- Be aware of the medications in your home. Have open conversations about appropriate versus inappropriate use of medication. Inform your friends and family that abusing medications can be just as dangerous as using illegal drugs.
- Ask your health care provider if any medications prescribed for your family have a potential for abuse.
- Be familiar with the warning signs of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse. Warning signs can be both behavioral and physical, and may include withdrawal from normal activities, irritability, unusual requests for money, unexplained changes in friends, and frequent nasal or sinus infections.

Communicate with Your Family

- Remind family members in your home that many medications do not mix well with alcohol or other medications, including herbal remedies.
- Teach your teens and younger children to respect medicines. Medicines are important tools in health care but they must be used according to directions.
- Set clear expectations with your teenagers and let them know that under no circumstances should they ever take medications without your knowledge.



How you can use the Medicine Cabinet Inventory

- List all prescriptions, including over-the-counter medications.
- Include the date of purchase and quantity.
- Include recommended dosage. Never increase or decrease doses without talking to your doctor.
- Keep all medications out of reach of all young children and adolescents.
- To properly dispose of unused or expired medications, dispose of medications in a community drop box site or mix them with used cat litter, coffee grounds or sawdust to make them less appealing, before throwing them in the garbage.

Medicine Cabinet Inventory

Use the following chart to help keep track of the medications in your medicine cabinet.

List the name and strength of the prescription and nonprescription medications. Include the date filled, the expiration date, and the original quantity. Once a week, count the pills remaining and mark the date.

Medication Name and Strength	Date Filled	Expiration Date	Original Quantity	Quantity Remaining			
				Date	Date	Date	Date

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www.combatheroin.ny.gov

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Students Should Know the Facts

Heroin and Prescription Opioids are a Serious Problem

Prescription drug misuse occurs when a person takes a prescription medication that is not prescribed for him/her, or takes it for reasons or in dosages other than as prescribed. The nonmedical use of prescription medications has increased in the past decade and has surpassed all illicit drug usage except marijuana in the United States. Misuse of prescription drugs can produce serious health effects, including addiction. One of the most striking aspects of the misuse of prescription medications has been the increase in painkiller abuse, which can lead to heroin use.

- Prescription analgesic overdoses killed nearly 15,000 people in the US in 2008, more than three times the 4,000 killed by these medications in 1999. (*CDC Vital Signs 11/2011*)
- Young adults ages 18 - 24 are particularly at risk, with increases in heroin/opioid admissions for treatment throughout the state. In particular, upstate New York (222% increase in admissions) and Long Island (242% increase) have been hard hit by this problem. (*NYS Client Data System*)
- In 2011, nonmedical use of prescription drugs among youth ages 12 - 17 and young adults ages 18 - 25 was the second most prevalent illicit drug use category, with marijuana being first. (*NSDUH 2011*)
- Between 2007 and 2012, the number of individuals using heroin during the past 30 days more than doubled nationwide (161,000 to 335,000). (*NSDUH 2012*)
- The percentage of New York State high school students who reported using heroin more than doubled between 2005 and 2011 (1.8 % to 4%). (*Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)*)

Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse Can Be Addictive and Deadly

Loss of tolerance

Regular use of opioids leads to greater tolerance. For example, more is needed to achieve the same effect (high). Overdoses occur when people begin to use again. This is usually following a period of not using (abstinence) such as after coming out of treatment.

Mixing drugs

Mixing heroin or prescription opioids with other drugs, especially depressants such as benzodiazepines (Xanax, Klonopin, etc.) or alcohol, can lead to an accidental overdose, respiratory problems and death. The effect of mixing drugs is greater than the effect one would expect if taking the drugs separately.

Variation in strength of heroin

Heroin may vary in strength and effect based on the purity.

Serious illness

Users with serious illness such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C, heart disease, and endocarditis are at greater risk for overdose.

Prevent Prescription Drug Misuse

Despite what some people may assume, abusing prescription drugs is not safe.

Safeguard Your Meds by placing your prescribed medication in a secure location and tracking the number of pills at all times

- Routine tracking of your prescribed medication is smart, especially when others live with you or visit your dorm room/apartment.
- Never share medication that is prescribed for you.
- Never take medication that was prescribed for someone else.
- Don't mix medications. Speak to your health care provider about all medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medications.

Pass It On

Share your knowledge, experience and support with your friends and family.



Ask for Help

There are many confidential resources available for students – if you ask! Ask your health care professional or seek assistance from a mental health or substance abuse counselor.

Signs and Symptoms

Change in behavior is key when one suspects there is substance abuse. The key is to get the person assistance as soon as possible.

Physical Signs

- Loss or increase in appetite; unexplained weight loss or gain
- Small pupils, decreased respiratory rate and a non-responsive state are all signs of opioid intoxication.
- Nausea, vomiting, sweating, shaky hands, feet or head, and large pupils are all signs of opioid withdrawal.

Behavioral Signs

- Change in attitude/personality
- Change in friends; new hangouts
- Avoiding contact with family or sports
- Change in activities, hobbies or sports
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Good Samaritan Law

Some individuals may fear that police will respond to a 911 call and there will be criminal charges for themselves or for the person who overdosed. Those fears should NEVER keep anyone from calling 911 immediately. It may be a matter of life or death.

In September 2011, the 911 Good Samaritan Law went into effect to address fears about a police response to an overdose. This law provides significant legal protection against criminal charges and prosecution for possession of controlled substances, as well as possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. This protection applies to both the person seeking assistance in good faith, as well as to the person who has overdosed. Class A-1 drug felonies, as well as sale or intent to sell controlled substances, are not covered by the law.

Properly Dispose of Old and Unused Medications

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Facts on Heroin and Prescription Opioids

A Serious Problem that can Lead to Heroin Addiction

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Prevent Prescription Drug Misuse

Lock Your Meds

Prevent your children from using your medication by securing it in a place your child cannot access.

Take Inventory

Download the Medicine Cabinet Inventory sheet; write down the name and amount of medications you currently have; and check regularly to ensure that nothing is missing. www.combatheroin.ny.gov



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Proper Disposal

To properly dispose of unused or expired medications, dispose of medications in a community drop box site or mix them with used cat litter, coffee grounds or sawdust to make them less appealing before throwing them in the garbage.

Educate Yourself & Your Child

Learn about the most commonly misused types of prescription medications (pain relievers, sedatives, stimulants and tranquilizers), then communicate the dangers to your child. Once is not enough.

Set Clear Rules & Monitor Behavior

Express your disapproval regarding the inappropriate and dangerous use of medications without a prescription. Monitor your child's behavior to ensure that the rules are being followed.

Pass It On

Share your knowledge, experience and support with the parents of your child's friends. Together, you can create a tipping point for change and raise safe, healthy and drug-free children.

Classification of Commonly Abused Prescription Drugs

OPIOIDS <i>Indicated for pain include:</i>	DEPRESSANTS <i>indicated for anxiety and sleep disorders include:</i>	STIMULANTS <i>indicated for ADHD include:</i>
Hydrocodone (Vicodin)	Barbiturates	Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine)
Oxycodone (Oxycontin)	Pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal)	Methylphenidate (Ritalin and Concerta)
Oxymorphone (Opana)	Benzodiazepines	Amphetamines (Adderall)
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	Diazepam (Valium)	
Meperidine (Demerol)	Alprazolam (Xanax)	
Diphenoxylate	Clonazepam (Klonopin)	
Codeine		
Fentanyl		
Morphine		
Opium and any other drug with morphine-like effects		

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