

2023 EDITION

Prescription for Disaster

How Teens Misuse Medicine



GetSmart *About Drugs*



Prescription for Disaster

How Teens

Misuse Medicine

A DEA Resource for Parents – 2023 edition

This publication is designed to be a guide to understand and identify the current medications and popular nonapproved substances teens are misusing. It is not all-inclusive; not every dosage unit or generic form of the medications can be listed due to space constraints and the frequent introduction of new drugs. For more information, visit the following DEA websites:

For general information: www.dea.gov

For parents, caregivers, and educators: www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com

For colleges and universities: www.campusdrugprevention.gov

For teens: www.justthinktwice.com

- 04** Prescription Drug Misuse
- 05** Over-the-Counter Medicines
- 06** Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs
- 08** How Big is the Problem?
- 09** Reading the Rx Label
- 11** How Teens Misuse Medicine
- 15** The Internet, Social Media, Drugs, and Teens
- 21** Misconceptions of Prescription Drugs
- 22** Drug-Impaired Driving
- 23** Illegal Internet Pharmacies
- 24** One Pill Can Kill
- 26** What is Drug Addiction?
- 27** Commonly Used and Misused Drugs
- 50** What You Can Do
- 54** DEA's Role
- 55** Resources



Prescription Drug Misuse

A prescription drug is a drug that is available only with authorization from a healthcare practitioner or a pharmacist.

The most misused prescription drugs fall under three categories:

→ Opioids

Medications that relieve pain such as Vicodin®, OxyContin®, or codeine.

Misusing opioids can cause severe respiratory depression or death and can be addictive.

→ Depressants

Substances that can slow brain activity such as benzodiazepines used to relieve anxiety or help someone sleep, like Valium® or Xanax®.

Misusing depressants can cause sleepiness, impaired mental functioning, blurred vision, and nausea and can be addictive.

→ Stimulants

Substances that increase attention and alertness and are used for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, such as Adderall®, Ritalin®, and Vyvanse®.

Misusing stimulants can cause irregular heartbeat, paranoia, and high body temperatures and can be addictive.

Over-the-Counter Medicines



Over-the-counter medicines are drugs you can buy without a prescription. They are safe and effective when you follow the directions on the label and as directed by your health care professional.

Source: FDA, Understanding Over-the-Counter Medicines www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/UnderstandingOver-the-CounterMedicines/default.htm

In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration decides whether a medicine is safe enough to sell over the counter.

Taking OTC medicines still has risks. Some interact with other medicines, supplements, foods, or drinks. Others cause problems for people with certain medical conditions.

Source: U.S. National Library of Medicine, Over-the-Counter Medicines www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/overthecountermedicines.htm

Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs

Most prescription drugs are safe and effective when used correctly for a medical condition and under a doctor's or dentist's supervision. But they can have serious side effects if not used correctly. Using a prescription for nonmedical reasons can lead to a substance use disorder or even death.

What is Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs?

- taking someone else's prescription medication;
- taking a prescription medication in a way other than prescribed;
- taking prescription medication to get high; or
- mixing it with other drugs.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/misuse-prescription-drugs/overview>



The relationship between prescription drug misuse and increases in heroin use in the United States is under scrutiny. Currently available research demonstrates:

- Prescription opioid use is a risk factor for heroin use.
- Prescription opioids and heroin have similar effects, but different risk factors.
- A subset of people who misuse prescription opioids might progress to heroin use.
- Heroin use is driven by its low cost and high availability.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports



From 1999-2021, opioid-related deaths increased by more than 10 times.

Source: www.cdc.gov



How Big is the Problem?

Although most people take prescription medications as directed, in 2021, an estimated 5% of 12th graders reported misusing any prescription drug in the past 12 months.

Source: 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

In 2022, one in 11 high school students said that at least once in their lifetime, they had taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription.

Source: 2022 Monitoring the Future, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan



Misuse of prescription drugs means taking a medication in a manner or dose other than prescribed; taking someone else's prescription, even if for a legitimate medical complaint such as pain; or taking a medication to feel euphoria.

Source: Summary of Misuse of Prescription Drugs, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/misuse-prescription-drugs/overview>

Reading the Rx Label



Labels on prescription and OTC drugs contain information about ingredients, uses, drug interactions, warnings, and directions that are important to read and understand. It is especially important to teach teens how to read labels and use prescription and OTC drugs safely.

What are the Types of Drug Interactions?

Drug-drug interactions occur when two or more drugs react with each other. This may cause you to experience an unexpected side effect. For example, mixing a drug you take to help you sleep (a sedative) and a drug you take for allergies (an antihistamine) can slow your reactions and make driving a car or operating machinery dangerous.

Drug-condition interactions may occur when an existing medical condition makes certain drugs potentially harmful. For example, if you have high blood pressure, you could experience an unwanted reaction if you take a nasal decongestant.

It is also important to recognize that everyone's metabolism and brain chemistry are different, and the same drugs can have very different effects on individuals.

Experimenting with medicine to get high is extremely dangerous, and mixing drugs to get high can be deadly.

A PARENT'S STORY



The Savage Brothers

Nick Savage was 19 years old, and his brother Jack was just 18 on June 14, 2015. On this day, they attended high school graduation parties, celebrating the milestone with all their friends and classmates. It was also the day these two brothers died. The reason for their passing: acute alcohol and oxycodone overdose.

Both boys graduated high school with honors, and were captain of their high school hockey team their senior years. Nick led his team to State Runners-up in 2014, and Jack led his team to earning the title of State Champions in 2015. Nick had already completed a year of college, and was home to spend the summer with the family. Jack was preparing for his first semester.

They chose to drink, and they chose to take a pill when it was offered to them. These choices were mistakes, and they paid the ultimate price for them.

Source: <https://www.525foundation.org/>

How Teens Misuse Medicine

Prescription drugs are the most commonly misused substances by teens after vaping, marijuana, and alcohol. When teens misuse prescription drugs and take them in different amounts or for reasons other than as prescribed, they affect the brain and body in ways very similar to illicit drugs.

When prescription drugs are misused, they can be addictive and have harmful health effects such as overdose (especially when taken along with other drugs or alcohol). An overdose is when a drug is swallowed, inhaled, injected, or absorbed through the skin in excessive amounts and injures the body. Overdoses may be toxic and lead to death. Overdoses are either intentional or unintentional. If the person taking or giving a substance did not mean to hurt themselves or others, then it is unintentional.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose

Some people take prescription stimulants to try to improve mental performance. Teens and college students sometimes misuse them to try to get better grades, and older adults misuse them to try to improve their memory. Taking prescription stimulants for reasons other than treating ADHD or narcolepsy could lead to harmful health effects, such as addiction, heart problems, or psychosis.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/prescription-stimulants

Women themselves describe unique reasons for using drugs, including controlling weight, fighting exhaustion, coping with pain, and attempts to self-treat mental health problems.

Source: Substance Use in Women DrugFacts, National Institute on Drug Abuse <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/substance-use-in-women/summary>

According to a national survey, among 12th graders, 3.4% used Adderall nonmedically in the past year.

Source: 2022 Monitoring the Future, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

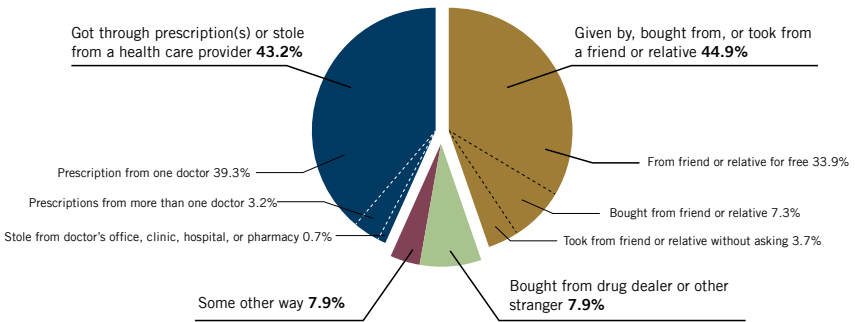
Remember: Sharing prescription drugs with family members or friends is illegal and dangerous.

Where do teens get their prescription drugs?

Many teens obtain prescription drugs from their family or friends.

Teens find prescription drugs and OTC medicines in their home medicine cabinet or on the kitchen shelf.

Source where pain relievers were obtained for most recent misuse: Among people aged 12 or older who misused pain relievers in the past year: 2021



Source: 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

How Teens Misuse Medicine



Possible warning signs of teen drug use

Teens are known to have mood swings. However, some behaviors may indicate more serious issues, such as misuse of drugs and alcohol. Here are some common warning signs of drug misuse.

→ Problems at school

- Poor academic performance
- Missing classes or skipping school
- Decreased interest in school or school activities
- Complaints from teachers or classmates

→ Physical signs

- Bloodshot eyes
- Pinpoint pupils
- Constant scratching
- Burns on fingers or lips (from smoking joints or something else through a metal or glass pipe)

→ **Changes in behavior**

Changing friends or social circles

Isolation from family or friends

Excessive demand for privacy

Lack of respect for authority

→ **Money issues**

Sudden requests for money without a good reason

Money stolen from your wallet or from safe places at home

Missing cash or other resources (which may be sold to buy drugs)

→ **Drug paraphernalia**

Finding items in your child's room, backpack, or car related to drug use.

Examples - Plastic baggies or small paper bags, cigarette packages, electronic-cigarettes, vaping devices, small glass vials, pill bottles, candy or gum wrappers, baseball cap/ski cap, belt buckle, felt tip marker and lipstick dispensers, makeup bags

Source: www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com

The Internet, Social Media, Drugs, and Teens



Many teens obtain prescription drugs from their family or friends. Since prescription drugs are widely available in the home, teens often do not have to go far to find ways to get high. Other teens turn to the internet and social media for prescription drugs; the internet also plays a big role in providing information and advice to teens.

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER

Your teen probably knows a lot more about the internet than you do. It's never too late for parents to jump in and get acquainted with various websites, communication methods, networking systems, and the lingo teens use to fly under parents' radars.

Some pharmacies operating on the internet are legal, and some are not. In fact, according to the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, 20 new illegal pharmacies appear on the internet each day. Some of the legal internet pharmacies have voluntarily sought certification as "Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites" from NABP. "Rogue" pharmacies pretend to be authentic by operating websites that advertise powerful drugs without a prescription or with the "approval" of a "doctor" working for the drug trafficking network. Teens have access to these websites and are exposed to offers of prescription drugs through e-mail spam or pop-ups. Parents should be aware of which sites their teens are visiting and should examine credit card and bank statements that may indicate drug purchases. They should also check the browser history to see which sites their teen is visiting on their computers and mobile devices.

Drug traffickers are using social media to advertise drugs and conduct sales. If you have a smartphone and a social media account, then a drug trafficker can find you. This also means they are finding your kids who have social media accounts.



The Internet, Social Media, Drugs, and Teens

Social media sites play a role in providing information and advice to teens on how to use prescription drugs to get high.


The only safe medications are ones that come from licensed and accredited medical professionals. DEA warns that pills purchased outside of a licensed pharmacy are illegal, dangerous, and potentially lethal.

COMMON EMOJI CODES





FAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

PERCOCET & OXYCODONE 	XANAX 	ADDERALL 
--	---	--

DEALER SIGNALS

DEALER ADVERTISING 	HIGH POTENCY 	UNIVERSAL FOR DRUGS 	LARGE BATCH 
--	--	---	---

OTHER DRUGS

METH 	HEROIN 	COCAINE 	
MDMA & MOLLIES 	MUSHROOMS 	COUGH SYRUP 	MARIJUANA 

These emoji codes reflect common examples used to purchase drugs on social media and e-commerce platforms.

Teens sometimes brag about their drug use and drinking on social networking sites. Posting pictures of themselves in compromising scenes may hurt their reputation and opportunities for employment and education. Their behavior is out there in the open for future employers, college admissions offices, and others to see.

The internet is a tremendous resource for teens to learn about the dangers of drug use. However, it is also full of information about how to use prescription drugs to get high – how much to use, what combinations work best, and what a user can expect to experience.

YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teens. Fully 95% of teens have access to a smartphone. Ninety-seven percent of teens say they use the internet daily, and 46% of teens say they use the internet almost constantly.

Source: Teens, Social Media & Technology 2022

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2022/08/10/teens-social-media-and-technology-2022/>

The Internet, Social Media, Drugs, and Teens



Teens are diversifying their social network site use

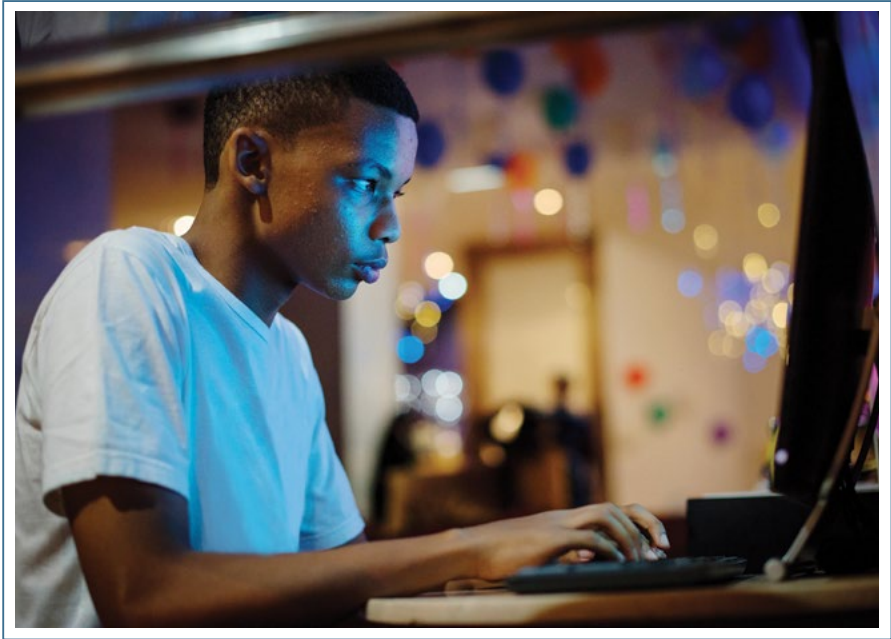
Teens use a variety of social media platforms with 95% using YouTube, 67% using TikTok, 62% using Instagram, and 59% using Snapchat.

Source: *Teens, Social Media & Technology 2022*

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2022/08/10/teens-social-media-and-technology-2022/>

There are thousands of websites dedicated to the proposition that drug use is a rite of passage. So-called experts are more than happy to walk your kids through a drug experience.

DON'T LET THEM.



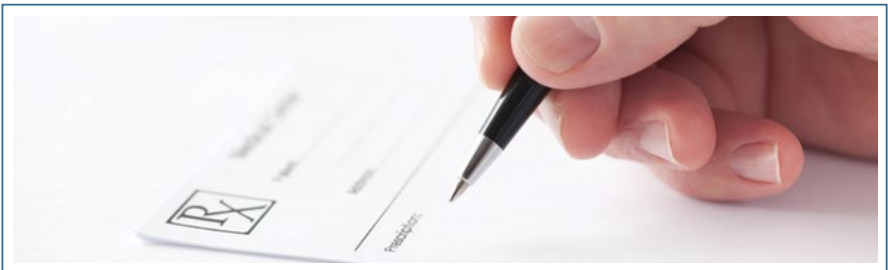
Misconceptions of Prescription Drugs



“Street drugs” is a term that refers to drugs that are commonly known as illegal drugs – cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, and others. Many teens wrongly believe that prescription drugs are safer than “street drugs” for a variety of reasons:

- Prescription drugs are medicines.
- They can be obtained from doctors, dentists, pharmacies, friends, or family members.
- It is not necessary to buy them from traditional “drug dealers.”
- Information on the effects of these drugs is widely available in package inserts, advertisements, and on social media sites.

Parents and teens need to understand that when OTC and prescription medications are used to get high, they are every bit as dangerous as “street drugs.” And when prescription drugs are used by or distributed to individuals without prescriptions, they are every bit as illegal.



Drug-Impaired Driving

What is drug-impaired driving? Driving under the influence of OTC medications, prescription drugs, or illegal drugs.

Why is drug-impaired driving dangerous? Many legally obtained and commonly used OTC and prescription drugs can affect a user's ability to drive safely.

Source: Drug-Impaired Driving, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

56% OF DRIVERS INVOLVED IN SERIOUS INJURY AND FATAL CRASHES TESTED POSITIVE FOR AT LEAST ONE DRUG

Source: Title: Update to Special Reports on Traffic Safety during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: Fourth Quarter Data [Traffic Safety Facts] NHTSA BSR Traffic Safety Facts

Remember: Any medications that act on parts of the brain can impair driving. Many prescription drugs have warning labels against the operation of machinery and driving motor vehicles for a certain period of time after use.

You are more likely to be injured or in an accident while driving under the influence of drugs.

Illegal Internet Pharmacies



Some pharmacies operating on the internet are illegal. No one should use a website to purchase a prescription drug unless –

- 1. the person has obtained a valid prescription from a medical practitioner who has conducted an in-person medical evaluation of the person, and
- 2. the website is operating in accordance with the Ryan Haight Act.

Report Suspicious Internet Pharmacies

If you or your teen is aware of someone distributing prescription drugs or selling them on a suspicious internet pharmacy site, you can report it to the DEA 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by using the RxAbuse online reporting tool located at www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov or by calling the DEA hotline toll free at 1-877-RxAbuse (1-877-792-2873).



One Pill Can Kill

Criminal drug networks are mass-producing fake pills and falsely marketing them as legitimate prescription pills to deceive the American public.

Fake pills often contain fentanyl and are more lethal than ever before.

DEA lab testing reveals that 7 out of every 10 pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose.

Drug traffickers are using fake pills to exploit the opioid crisis and prescription drug misuse. In 2022, an estimated 110,757 people died by drug poisoning in the United States.

Fake pills are easy to purchase, widely available, often contain fentanyl or methamphetamine, and can be deadly.

Fake prescription pills are easily accessible and often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms, making them available to anyone with a smartphone, including minors.

Many fake pills are made to look like prescription drugs such as oxycodone (Oxycontin[®], Percocet[®]), hydrocodone (Vicodin[®]), and alprazolam (Xanax[®]); or stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall[®]).

Source: www.dea.gov/onepill



ONE
PILL **CAN**
KILL

<https://www.dea.gov/onepill>

WYATT'S STORY



With his big and shining personality, 23-year-old Wyatt Williamson lit up every room he entered. “Wyatt really didn’t know a stranger,” his mother, Julie Hofmans, said. “Everybody loved Wyatt. He was my best friend”. Wyatt tragically passed away at age 23 after taking a pill he thought was Xanax, but was actually laced with the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl. “He took a chance and didn’t even know he was taking that chance, he thought he was taking a Xanax.” By sharing Wyatt’s story, Julie hopes to save other families from the tragedy and heartache caused by fake pills.

Source: www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com

What is Drug Addiction?

Addiction is a chronic disease characterized by drug seeking and use that is compulsive, or difficult to control, despite harmful consequences. The initial decision to take drugs is voluntary for most people, but repeated drug use can lead to brain changes that challenge an addicted person’s self-control and interfere with their ability to resist intense urges to take drugs. These brain changes can be persistent, which is why drug addiction is considered a “relapsing” disease—people in recovery from drug use disorders are at increased risk for returning to drug use even after years of not taking the drug.

Source: Understanding Drug Use and Addiction, Drugfacts, National Institute on Drug Abuse
<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction>

Prescription drug misuse can have serious medical consequences. An overall increase in prescription drug misuse over the past two decades is reflected in treatment admissions for prescription drug use disorders and overdose deaths involving prescription drugs

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/misuse-prescription-drugs/overview>

Commonly Used and Misused Drugs



Categories of Drugs

Illegal drugs and legitimate medications are categorized according to their medical use, potential for misuse, and their potential for creating physical or psychological dependence.

The Controlled Substances Act regulates six classes of drugs:

- **Narcotics**
- **Stimulants**
- **Depressants**
- **Hallucinogens**
- **Anabolic Steroids**
- **Over-the-Counter Substances**

Within each class are substances that occur naturally and substances created in laboratories (synthetics). When they are used appropriately in the practice of medicine, these substances can have beneficial properties. When used for nonmedical purposes, including the desire to get high, these drugs can cause great harm and even death.

narcotics → substances that dull the senses and relieve pain



FENTANYL, HEROIN, AND OTHER OPIOIDS

Narcotic Medicines

Used to treat mild to severe pain (anything from dental surgery to terminal cancer). Also used to suppress coughs, treat diarrhea, induce sleep, and treat heroin addiction.

Forms

Liquid, tablet, capsule, skin patch, powder, syrup, lollipop, and suppository.

Adverse Effects

Slowed physical activity, constriction of the pupils, flushing of the face and neck, constipation, nausea, vomiting, and slowed breathing.

Overdose Effects

Slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, confusion, convulsions, coma, and possible death.

Narcotic medications available only with a prescription:

(Note: Lists are not all inclusive.)

{ codeine cough syrup }

ROBITUSSIN A-C SYRUP® | MYTUSSIN AC COUGH SYRUP®

Cough syrups sometimes include other ingredients such as antihistamines (promethazine). Some controlled substances, including cough syrups, can be dispensed by a pharmacist without a prescription (21 C.F.R. 1306.26).

slang names: Lean, Purple Drank, Sippin Syrup

{ fentanyl }

DURAGESIC PATCH® | ACTIQ LOZENGE®

Fentanyl is a very powerful painkiller, 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin as an analgesic. Encounters with fentanyl that are not medically supervised are frequently fatal. This narcotic is most commonly used clinically by wearing a patch or sucking on a lozenge. A new effervescent tablet, Fentora®, is now available to place between the cheek and gum.

Clandestinely produced fentanyl is usually smoked, snorted, or injected.

slang names: China Girl, China White, Dance Fever, Tango & Cash

{ fentanyl-like substances }

Fentanyl-like substances have recently made a resurgence in the illicit drug market. The biological effects of fentanyl-like substances are similar to fentanyl, including severe respiratory depression (decreased breathing) that can result in death. Fentanyl-like substances are often indistinguishable from fentanyl or heroin, and are ingested in similar manners to these substances. Some recent examples of fentanyl-like substances include acetyl fentanyl, 4-fluoroisobutyryl fentanyl (4-FIBF), and cyclopropyl fentanyl among many others. These substances have no approved medical use.

{ hydrocodone }

VICODIN® | LORTAB® | LORCET® | HYDROCODONE WITH ACETAMINOPHEN

Hydrocodone products are used for pain relief and cough suppression.

Hydrocodone products are the most frequently prescribed opioids in the United States, and they are also the most misused narcotic in the United States.

{ methadone }

DOLOPHINE® | METHADOSE®

Methadone has been used for years to treat people with a heroin use disorder. It is also used as a powerful painkiller. While it may be legally used under a doctor's supervision, its nonmedical use is illegal. Methadone is available as a tablet, oral solution, or ingestible liquid. Tablets are available in 5mg and 10mg formulations. As of January 1, 2008, manufacturers of methadone hydrochloride tablets 40mg have voluntarily agreed to restrict distribution of this formulation to only those facilities authorized for detoxification and maintenance treatment of opioid addiction and hospitals.

{ oxycodone }

OXYCONTIN® | PERCODAN® | TYLOX

Oxycodone products are very powerful painkillers. Oxycodone is widely used in clinical medicine. It is marketed either alone as controlled release (OxyContin®) and immediate release formulations (OxyIR®, OxyFast®), or in combination with other non-narcotic analgesics such as aspirin (Percodan®) or acetaminophen (Percocet®). Oxycodone's behavioral effects can last up to five hours. The drug is most often administered orally. The controlled-release product, OxyContin®, has a longer duration of action (8-12 hours).

slang names: Oxy cotton, Percs, OC, OX, Oxy, Hillbilly Heroin, Kicker.

Other misused narcotics

{ meperidine } demerol®

{ hydromorphone } dilaudid®

{ oxycodone with acetaminophen } endocet®

{ codeine } fiorinal®

{ morphine } oramorph sr®

{ oxycodone with acetaminophen } roxicet®

{ pentazocine } talwin®

{ cough syrup with hydrocodone } tussionex®

How are narcotics misused?

Narcotics/opioids can be swallowed, smoked, sniffed, or injected.

Where would a teen obtain narcotics?

Friends, relatives, medicine cabinets, pharmacies, nursing homes, hospitals, hospices, doctors, and online. They can also be purchased on the street.

narcotics



5mg



7.5mg



10mg

{ LORTAB® }



10mg



20mg



40mg



80mg

{ OXYCONTIN® }

*hydrocodone bitartrate-acetaminophen



*5-500mg



*10-660mg



*7.5-750mg

{ VICODIN® }



600mcg



400mcg



600mcg

{ ACTIQ® }

{ GLOSSARY }

With repeated use of narcotics, tolerance and dependence develop.

Tolerance *occurs when the person no longer responds to the drug in the way that person initially responded. Stated another way, it takes a higher dose of the drug to achieve the same level of response achieved initially.*

Source: NIDA, 2007, The Neurobiology of Drug Addiction

Physical Dependence *is not equivalent to addiction, and may occur with the regular (daily or almost daily) use of any substance, legal or illegal, even when taken as prescribed. It occurs because the body naturally adapts to regular exposure to a substance. When that substance is taken away, symptoms can emerge while the body re-adjusts to the loss of the substance. Physical dependence can lead to craving the drug to relieve the withdrawal symptoms.*

Source: NIDA, 2018, Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide (Third Edition)

stimulants

→ substances that stimulate bodily activity and reverse fatigue (uppers)

COCAINE (POWDER OR CRACK), METHAMPHETAMINE, AMPHETAMINES, KHAT, SYNTHETIC CATHINONES (BATH SALTS)



Stimulant Medicines

Many stimulants have legitimate medical use and are scheduled by the DEA. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants that are not controlled.

Stimulant medicines are used to treat obesity, ADHD, and narcolepsy. Pseudoephedrine, found in allergy and cold medications to relieve sinus congestion and pressure, is also a stimulant chemical. Methamphetamine and cocaine have limited legitimate medical uses. Crack cocaine and khat have no legitimate medical uses and are not prescription medicines.

Forms

Pills, powder, rocks, plant material, and injectable liquids.

Adverse Effects

When stimulants are misused or not used under a doctor's supervision, they are frequently taken to produce a sense of exhilaration, enhance self-esteem, improve mental and physical performance, increase activity, reduce appetite, extend wakefulness for a prolonged period, and get high.

Overdose Effects

Taking too large a dose at one time or taking large doses over an extended period of time may cause such physical side effects such as dizziness, tremors, headache, flushed skin, chest pain with palpitations, excessive sweating, vomiting, and abdominal cramps.

During an overdose, unless there is medical intervention, high fever, convulsion, and cardiovascular collapse may precede death.

Stimulant medications available only with a prescription:

(Note: Methamphetamine and cocaine have limited legitimate medical uses. Lists are not all inclusive.)

{ amphetamines }

ADDERALL® | DEXEDRINE® | DESOXYN® (METHAMPHETAMINE)

Amphetamines are used to treat ADHD/ADD.

slang names: Bennies, Black Beauties, Crank, Ice, Speed, Uppers

{ methylphenidate and dexmethylphenidate }

CONCERTA® | RITALIN® | FOCALIN®

These drugs are used to treat ADHD/ADD.

slang names: Pellets, R-Ball, Skippy, Vitamin R

{ methamphetamine }

Ingestion of the stimulant methamphetamine can result in severe agitation, delirium, hallucinations, irregular heartbeat, heart attack, and possibly death. Methamphetamine is a highly addictive substance.

slang names: Meth, Ice

stimulants

Other misused stimulants

{ phentermine }

ADIPEX® | IONAMIN®

{ benzphetamine }

DIDREX®

{ phendimetrazine }

PRELU-2®

These drugs are used in weight control.

{ synthetic cathinones (bath salts) }

Illicit substances with no medical use ingested to mimic the effects of drugs including methamphetamine, cocaine, and MDMA.

slang names: Molly, Ecstasy, Salts

How are stimulants misused?

Stimulants can be pills or capsules that are swallowed. Smoking, snorting, or injecting stimulants produces a sudden sensation known as a “rush” or a “flash.”

Where would a teen obtain stimulants?

Friends, relatives, doctors, pharmacies, schools, online, and street drug dealers.



5mg



10mg



20mg



10mg

{ RITALIN® }



37.5mg



100mg



200mg

{ ADIPEX® }

{ PROVIGIL® }



5mg



10mg

{ DEXEDRINE® }



2.5mg



10mg



5mg



20mg

{ FOCALIN® }

{ FOCALIN XR® }

depressants



substances that include sedatives, tranquilizers, and hypnotics. These drugs can slow brain activity, making them useful for treating sleep disorders, anxiety, muscle spasms, and to prevent seizures



ALCOHOL, VALIUM[®], XANAX[®], TRANQUILIZERS, SLEEPING PILLS, ROHYPNOL[®], GHB

Depressant Medicines

Depressants will put you to sleep, relieve anxiety and muscle spasms, and prevent seizures.

Forms

Pills, syrups, and injectable liquids.

Adverse Effects

Slurred speech, problems with movement and memory, poor concentration, confusion, weakness, headache, lightheadedness, blurred vision, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure, and slowed breathing.

Overdose Effects

Signs can include shallow breathing or no breathing, clammy skin, dilated pupils, weak but rapid pulse, and coma. Overdose may be fatal.

Depressant medications available only with a prescription:

(Note: Lists are not all inclusive)

{ benzodiazepines }

VALIUM® | XANAX® | RESTORIL® | ATIVAN® | KLONOPIN®

Benzodiazepines are used as sedatives, hypnotics, anticonvulsants, muscle relaxants, and to treat anxiety. Benzodiazepines were developed to replace barbiturates, though they still share many of the undesirable side effects, including tolerance and dependence.

slang names: Benzos, Downers, Nerve Pills, Tranks

{ sleeping pills }

AMBIEN® | LUNESTA® | SONATA®

These depressants are sedative-hypnotic medications approved for the short-term treatment of insomnia.

Other misused depressants

{ chloral hydrate } SOMNOTE®

{ barbiturates, such as butalbital and pentobarbital }

{ GHB } XYREM®

{ carisoprodol } SOMA®

{ ketamine } KETALAR®

Please note that even though ketamine is a dissociative drug used as an anesthetic in veterinary practice, it is misused for its hallucinogenic effects.

depressants

How are depressants misused?

Individuals misuse depressants to self-medicate, relax, and to experience euphoria. Depressants are also used with other drugs to add to the other drugs' high or to deal with their side effects. Depressants like GHB and Rohypnol are also misused to facilitate sexual assault.

Where would a teen obtain depressants?

Family medicine cabinet, friends, family members, online, doctors, and hospitals.

a PARENT'S story }

Jason Surks was 19 and in his second year of college, studying to be a pharmacist, when he died of an overdose of depressant pills. After his death, his parents discovered that he had been ordering controlled substances from an internet pharmacy in Mexico. His mother, Linda, writes: "I thought to myself that this couldn't be possible. I work in prevention, and Jason knew the dangers—we talked about it often. I think back to the last several months of my son's life, trying to identify any signs I might have missed.

"I remember that during his first year in college, I discovered an unlabeled pill bottle in his room. I took the pills to my computer and identified them as a generic form of Ritalin. When I confronted Jason, he told me he got them from a friend who'd been prescribed the medication. He wanted to see if they would help him with his problem focusing in school. I took that opportunity to educate him on the dangers of abusing prescription drugs and told him that if he really thought he had ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), we should pursue this with a clinician. He promised he would stop using the drug. But as a pre-pharmacy major, maybe he felt he knew more about these substances than he actually did and had a 'professional curiosity' about them.

Source: As recounted on www.drugfree.org/memorials.



1mg

{ ativan® }



2mg



7.5mg

{ restoril® }



1mg

{ xanax® }



2mg



.5mg

3mg

{ xanax xr® }



2mg

{ valium® }



5mg



10mg



.5mg

{ klonopin® }



1mg



2mg wafer



1mg

Hallucinogens → drugs that can cause hallucinations, agitation, delirium, seizures, and other adverse health effects



SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS (SPICE/K₂), SYNTHETIC CATHINONES (BATH SALTS), CLASSIC SEROTONIN-MEDIATED HALLUCINOGENS (TRYPTAMINES, PHENETHYLAMINES, AND LSD AND LSD-LIKE SUBSTANCES) PCP AND PCP-LIKE SUBSTANCES, MDMA-LIKE SUBSTANCES (ECSTASY/MOLLY)

NOTE: The only FDA-approved drug products considered hallucinogens are dronabinol and nabilone. The rest noted here are illicit.

Hallucinogenic Substances

Used to promote euphoria and hallucinogenic experiences.

Forms

Synthetic Cannabinoids: often encountered on green plant material resembling marijuana in appearance and intended to be smoked or diluted in liquid form to be used in e-cigarettes.

Bath Salts: often encountered in powder, rock, or pill form; can be used by snorting, injecting, or swallowing (pill form).

Classic Serotonin-Mediated Hallucinogens (Tryptamines, Phenethylamines, and LSD and LSD-like substances): often encountered in powder form; can be used by snorting, injecting, or swallowing. Tryptamines such as psilocybin and psilocyn can be found in mushrooms which can be eaten fresh, dried, or consumed as a tea. LSD and LSD-like substances: often found applied to blotter paper or in powder form that can be snorted, swallowed, or placed in mouth.

PCP and PCP-like substances: often found applied to blotter paper or in powder form that can be snorted, swallowed, or placed in mouth.

Adverse Effects

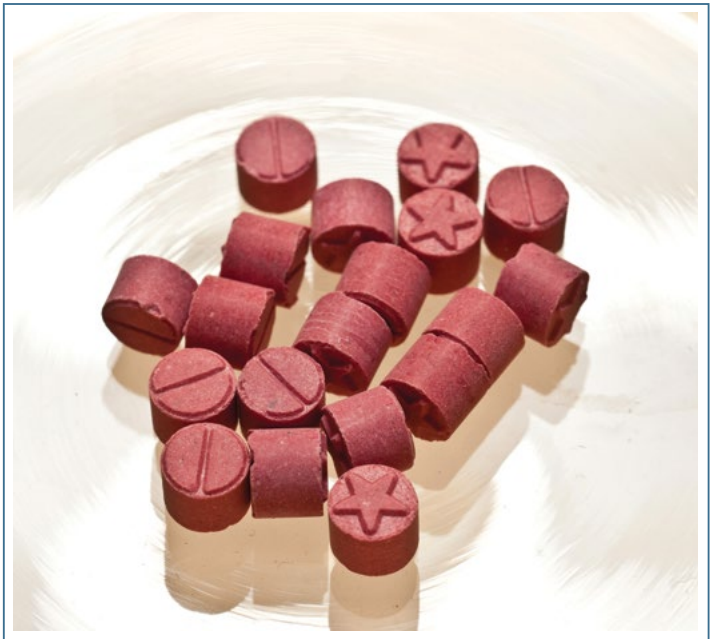
Wide range of effects that can include hallucinations, agitation, delirium, seizures, coma, heart attacks, hypertension, and many others.

Varies depending on substance, but overdose often requires medical attention to treat symptoms and can be fatal even with medical intervention or hospital care.

Overdose Effects

Synthetic cannabinoids are chemicals meant to mimic the psychoactive effects of THC but have been shown to be extremely potent in regard to their adverse effects. The synthetic cannabinoid powder is dissolved in liquid before being applied to a green plant material to resemble the physical appearance of marijuana or used in an e-cigarette. Severe adverse effects including hallucinations, agitation, delirium, seizures, coma, heart attacks, hypertension, and death.

slang names: K2, Mojo, Skooby Snax, Spice



Anabolic Androgenic Steroids → drugs used to enhance performance, increase muscle mass, and improve appearance



TESTOSTERONE

Anabolic Androgenic Steroids

Synthetically produced variants of the naturally occurring male hormone testosterone, which are misused to promote muscle growth, enhance athletic or other physical performance, or improve physical appearance. Only a small number of anabolic steroids are approved for either human or veterinary use. Steroids may be prescribed by a licensed physician for the treatment of testosterone deficiency, delayed puberty, low red blood cell count, breast cancer, and tissue wasting resulting from AIDS.

Forms

Tablets and capsules, sublingual tablets, liquid drops, gels, creams, transdermal patches, subdermal implant pellets, and water-based and oil-based injectable solutions.

Adverse Effects

Males: In adults, shrinking of the testicles, baldness, reduced sperm count, enlargement of the male breast tissue, sterility, and an increased risk of prostate cancer. In boys, early sexual development, acne, and stunted growth.

Females: In adolescent girls and women, deepening of the voice, increasing facial and body hair growth, menstrual irregularities, male pattern baldness, and lengthening of the clitoris.

Both: High cholesterol levels, which may increase the risk of coronary artery disease, strokes, and heart attacks; severe acne; and fluid retention. Oral preparations of anabolic steroids, in particular, can damage the liver. In addition, altered mood, irritability, depression, and increased aggression are associated with adverse reactions to anabolic steroids. The use of anabolic steroids have been associated with life-threatening reactions such as nephrotoxicity, heart attack, stroke, blood clots in the lungs, and deep vein thrombosis.

Upon discontinuation: When users stop taking steroids, they might experience depression severe enough to lead one to attempt suicide.

Steroids available only with a prescription:

(Note: Lists are not all inclusive)

{ anabolic steroids }

ANADROL® | ANDRO® | DECA-DURABOLIN® | DEPO-TESTOSTERONE®
DURABOLIN® | EQUIPOISE® | OXANDRIN® | THG® | WINSTROL®

slang names: Arnolds, Juice, Pumpers, Roids, Stackers, Weight
Gainers

How are steroids misused?

Steroids are taken orally, injected, or applied to the skin. The doses misused are often 10 to 100 times higher than the approved therapeutic and medical treatment dosages. Users typically take two or more anabolic steroids at the same time in a cyclic manner, believing this will improve their effectiveness and minimize the adverse effects.

Where would a teen obtain steroids?

The internet is the most widely used means of buying and selling anabolic steroids. Steroids are also bought and sold at gyms, bodybuilding competitions, and schools from teammates, coaches, and trainers.



{ depo-testosterone® }



25mg



50mg

{ anadrol® }



{ Steroid capsules }



A Parent's Story

Efrain was found in his parents' bedroom dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. At age 19, Efrain had the highest respect for his parents and was very kind at heart. He adored his baby brother, Ethyn and younger sister, Erika. He was raised in a solidly Christian home, and had embraced his faith. A hard-working young man, he was attending a local community college, studying hard—he had a plan for his life, a direction.

Efrain was preparing to play football at the community college he was attending, but didn't want to play his normal position of lineman. He wanted a more prestigious position of linebacker. Efrain began using steroids, under the impression that it would make him bigger, stronger, faster, and earn him the title and recognition he so much desired. Efrain, unaware of the serious side effects of steroids, began to experience severe paranoia and deep depression, but did the right thing and turned to his parents for help.

Approximately three weeks before his death, Efrain told them that he was using steroids and was afraid that something was terribly wrong. He said that in one of his classes he felt as if people were staring at him and laughing, and also said, "I don't care for much anymore."

His parents consulted the family physician, who assured them the substances would pass out of his system soon—no further action was required. However, advising him to quit using steroids "cold turkey" was a bad idea—the doctor failed to provide them with an appropriate course of action. Three weeks later, Efrain killed himself, and left no doubt in the family's minds that the deep depression associated with the use and sudden withdrawal of steroids led to Efrain's death.

over-the-counter → medications with dextromethorphan (hallucinogen)



ROBITUSSIN®, CORICIDIN HBP®, NYQUIL®

OTC Medicines with DXM

There are more than 120 OTC cold medicines that contain DXM, either as the only active ingredient or in combination with other active ingredients.

Forms

These medications (store brands as well as brand names) can be purchased in pharmacies, grocery stores, and other outlets.

Adverse Effects

Cough syrup, tablets, capsules, or powder.

Some of the many psychoactive effects associated with high-dose DXM include confusion, inappropriate laughter, agitation, paranoia, and hallucinations. DXM intoxication also has physical effects, including over excitability, lethargy, loss of coordination, slurred speech, sweating, hypertension, and involuntary spasmodic movement of the eyeballs.

Overdose Effects

DXM overdose can be treated in an emergency room setting and generally does not result in severe medical consequences or death. Most DXM-related deaths are caused by ingesting the drug in combination with other drugs. DXM-related deaths also occur from impairment of the senses, which can lead to accidents.

How are OTC cold medications with DXM misused?

DXM misuse has traditionally involved drinking large volumes of the OTC liquid cough preparations. More recently, however, misuse of tablet and gel capsule preparations has increased.

Where would a teen obtain OTCs with DXM?

Friends, relatives, pharmacies, grocery stores, and discount department and warehouse stores. DXM products and powder can also be purchased online.

Warning signs of OTC cold medicine misuse include:

Empty cough medicine boxes or bottles in child's room, backpack, or locker.

Purchase or use of large amounts of cough medicine when not ill. Missing boxes or bottles of medicine from home medicine cabinet. Visiting websites that provide information on how to misuse DXM.

Source: <http://stopmedicineabuse.org>.

{ TRENDS

What You Can Do

Because prescription drugs are legal, they are easily accessible. Parents, law enforcement personnel, educators, the medical community, and all levels of government have a role to play in reducing the nonmedical use of prescription drugs.

Talk with your teen about the consequences of misusing prescription and OTC drugs and the importance of healthy choices.

Choose the right time to talk. When talking to your child, be sure your child is sober or has not been using drugs before talking about drugs and alcohol.

Voice your suspicion. Begin by expressing your concerns without making accusations.

Be specific. Explain what you observed to make you concerned. For example, you found missing pills or an empty pill bottle, or your child's appearance indicates a potential problem.

What You Can Do

Be prepared for strong reactions. Your child may accuse you of snooping or say you're crazy. Stay calm.

Reinforce what you think about drug use. Tell her how much you care for him or her.

Get help from the experts. Contact the school counselor, school nurse, or family doctor about your concerns.

TIP: A teen that is using drugs or alcohol needs to be evaluated by a professional for a possible substance use disorder.

Ask teens what they find out about prescription drugs at school, at friends' homes, at parties, and on social media sites.

Get information about teen misuse of prescription drug medications. Learn what the medication is used for, what it looks like, its effects and interactions, and how teens are using it.

For more detailed information, see Section 4 (How Do I Talk to My Child about Drugs) in *Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Substance Use Prevention*. It is available online at www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/publications.

Learn The Facts

Understand the power and danger of these medications. Many medications, particularly narcotic pain relievers (opioid medications), are very powerful and are designed to relieve extreme pain. New medications are continually being approved for medical use, and it is important to be informed about these drugs' uses and properties.

Follow disposal guidelines for unused or expired medicines. Read DEA's flier on how to properly dispose of unused medicines, which is available online at <https://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov/publication/how-properly-dispose-your-unused-medicines>.

Ask your doctor, dentist, and pharmacist about the medications you are prescribed. Ask about their side effects, interactions, and potential for addiction.

Review what is in your medicine cabinet. Lock up medications in a safe place. Count your pills when you receive them, and periodically check to see how many are in the container. Avoid keeping prescription painkillers or sedatives around "just in case."

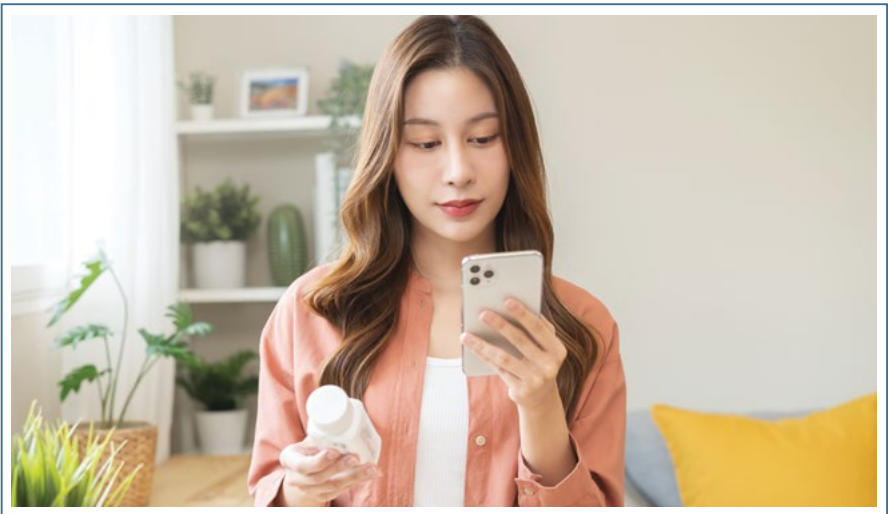




LEARN THE FACTS

Read the labels. The prescription label includes important information about how much to take; interactions with food and beverages, supplements, and other drugs; ingredients; and possible side effects. Many generic prescriptions are substituted for brand name drugs. Usually, the generic name of the drug is printed with the brand name, so that the customer knows which medication they receive. It may be easy to overlook the fact that the doctor has prescribed a very powerful narcotic painkiller.

Remember: Use of prescription medicines without a doctor's recommendation can be just as dangerous as using illegal drugs. Improper use can have serious health effects, including addiction and overdose. Reinforce this with your teen.



DEA's Role



DEA plays a critical role in preventing prescription drug misuse.

DEA investigates physicians who sell prescriptions to drug dealers or who overprescribe drugs; pharmacists who falsify records and then sell the drugs; employees who steal from drug inventory; executives who falsify orders to cover illicit sales; prescription forgers; and persons who commit armed robbery of pharmacies and drug distributors.

DEA investigates illegal internet pharmacies. Rogue pharmacies exist to profit from the sale of controlled prescription medications to buyers who have not seen a doctor and do not have a prescription from a registered physician. Rogue pharmacies lack quality assurance and accountability, and their products pose a danger to buyers.

DEA works with state, local, and national and international partners to interdict controlled substances and chemicals used to make drugs.

DEA's authority to enforce laws and regulations comes from the Controlled Substances Act, Title 21 of the United States Code. DEA also provides fact-based timely information to the public about the dangers of illegal drugs and the nonmedical use of prescription drugs through publications, websites, and presentations.

{ SELECTED RESOURCES }

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Drug Overdose
www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
www.cadca.org

Drug Enforcement Administration
www.dea.gov

DEA National Prescription Drug Take Back Day
www.deatakeback.com

DEA's website for colleges and universities
www.campusdrugprevention.gov

DEA's website for parents, caregivers, and educators
www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com

DEA's website for teens
www.justthinktwice.com

Institute for Behavior and Health
www.stopdruggeddriving.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.nida.nih.gov

National Family Partnership
www.nfp.org

National Library of Medicine
www.medlineplus.gov (*Spanish version: www.medlineplus.gov/spanish*)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
www.988lifeline.org

Office of National Drug Control Policy
www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/

Operation Prevention
www.operationprevention.com

Partnership to End Addiction
www.drugfree.org

Stop Medicine Abuse
www.stopmedicineabuse.org

Students Against Destructive Decisions
www.sadd.org

GET THE FACTS ABOUT DRUGS
JUST THINK TWICE
A Resource for Teens
www.justthinktwice.com

GET SMART
ABOUT DRUGS
A DEA RESOURCE FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS & CAREGIVERS
WWW.GETSMARTABOUTDRUGS.COM

Campus Drug Prevention
www.campusdrugprevention.gov

OPERATION
PREVENTION
WWW.OPERATIONPREVENTION.COM

**Drug Enforcement Administration
Community Outreach and Prevention Support Section
8701 Morrissette Drive Springfield, VA 22152
community.outreach@dea.gov**

To locate your local Poison Control Center or for assistance on recommended treatment for the ingestion of household products and medicines, go to America's Poison Centers at www.poisoncenters.org or call the Poison Help Line at 1-800-222-1222, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



GetSmart *About Drugs*
A DEA Resource for Parents

