



PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

January 2009

Teens are finding it easier and easier to get their hands on prescription drugs. In contrast, parents underestimate how easy it is for teens to buy prescription drugs. The level of parental awareness of their teen's nighttime activities is also related to an increase in prescription drug use.

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US?

- Seven of the top ten drugs being misused by high-school seniors are legal prescription or over-the-counter drugs. (2008 Monitoring the Future report)
- Half of the teens said they were out on school nights, while only 14% of the parents knew that they were out. (Columbia University study)
- Of the teens out after 10 p.m., half claim to be with people who are smoking and taking drugs. (Columbia University study)
- 1 in 5 (4.4 million) teens has abused a prescription drug. (Partnership Attitude Tracking Study)
- Almost 1 in 5 teens (4.2 million) has already abused a prescription painkiller. (PATS)
- 41% of teens think it is safer to abuse a prescription drug than it is to use illegal drugs. (PATS)
- 19% of teens say that prescription drugs are the easiest drug to obtain. (CESAR Fax)
- 8% of parents say prescription drugs are easiest for teens to buy. (CESAR Fax)

WHERE DO YOUTH GET THE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?

- Internet sales, without a prescription
- From a friend's home while visiting
- From their own homes, in the medicine cabinet and their own leftover prescriptions
- From other relatives' homes while visiting
- From friends and siblings who have prescriptions for conditions or after surgeries

WHY DO YOUTH BECOME INVOLVED WITH DRUGS, BOTH LEGAL AND ILLEGAL?

- Curiosity
- To feel good
- To reduce stress
- To feel grown up
- To fit in

WHAT ARE 'PHARM' PARTIES?

"Pharm" (short for pharmaceutical) parties are gatherings where those attending bring some kind of prescription drug and pass them around. Sometimes the drugs are put in a bowl and participants grab a handful to swallow.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMONLY ABUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?

- Opioids...these are narcotic analgesics used to treat pain. Examples of this type of drug include: morphine, codeine, OxyContin (oxycodone), Vicodin (hydrocodone) and Demerol.
- Central Nervous System (CNS) Depressants...commonly used to treat anxiety, panic disorders and sleep disorders. Examples include: Nembutal, Valium, and Xanax.
- Stimulants...used to treat narcolepsy and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Examples include: Ritalin and Dexedrine.