

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Think about your home. What prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs do you have? Where are they kept? Would you know if some were missing?

## DANGERS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

The new threat to our teens is in your medicine cabinet: the abuse of prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. Parents and caregivers are the first line of defense in addressing this troubling trend.

Teens are abusing some Rx and OTC drugs to get high. This includes painkillers, such as those drugs prescribed after surgery; depressants, such as sleeping pills or anti-anxiety drugs; and stimulants, such as those drugs prescribed for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Teens are also abusing over-the-counter drugs, such as cough and cold remedies that include dextromethorphan (DXM).

### Why should parents care about this?

1. More teens abuse Rx drugs than any other illicit drug, except marijuana.
2. Rx and OTC drugs are easily accessible.
3. Many teens believe it is safe to abuse Rx and OTC drugs.
4. Abuse of Rx drugs can be dangerous, even fatal.
5. Teens often sell their medication to others.

### What can you do? Tips for Preventing Rx Abuse

1. Safeguard all drugs at home. Monitor quantities and control access.
2. Set clear rules for teens about all drug use, including not sharing medicine and following the medical provider's advice and dosages.
3. Be a good role model by following these same rules with your own medicines. Properly conceal and dispose of old or unused medicines in the trash. (See other side.)
4. Ask friends and family to safeguard their Rx drugs as well.

Talk to your teen about the dangers of abusing prescription and OTC drugs. These are powerful drugs that, when abused, can be just as dangerous as street drugs.

Source: *TheAntiDrug.com*

This flyer is provided by the Chemical Health Action Collaborative in Washington County, 651-351-3117



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10/11

## DISPOSING OF MEDICATIONS AT HOME

Do not flush down the toilet to prevent groundwater contamination. Your unwanted medications may be disposed of in your trash. Follow these precautions to prevent accidental or intentional ingestion.

1. **Keep the medication in its original container.** The labels may contain safety information. Leaving the content information clearly visible, cover the patient's name with permanent marker.
2. **Modify the medications to discourage consumption.**  
**Solid medications:** add a small amount of vinegar to pills or capsules to partially dissolve them.  
**Liquid medications:** add table salt, flour, or nontoxic powdered spice, such as mustard to make a pungent, unsightly mixture that discourages anyone from eating it.  
**Blister packs:** wrap packages containing pills in opaque tape like duct tape.
3. **Seal and conceal.** Tape the medication container lid shut with packing or duct tape, and put it inside a non-transparent bag or container such as an empty yogurt or margarine tub to ensure that the contents cannot be seen.
4. **Discard the container in your garbage can—do not place in the recycling bin.**

Source: *Minnesota Pollution Control Agency*

Prescription Drug Take Back events are being sponsored by the Washington County Sheriff's Office, the Department of Public Health and Environment and the Drug Enforcement Administration. For more information, call the Sheriff's Office at 651-430-7800.

Poison Center

1-800-222-1222

If you are concerned about yourself or someone else, talk to your doctor or school counselor - help is available.

### For chemical health support and assessment call:

AA Intergroup (St. Paul)	651-227-5502
Anthony Lewis Center	651-731-0031
Fairview Behavioral Services	612-672-2736
Hazelden Intake	651-213-4018
Human Services, Inc.	651-777-5222
Washington County Chemical Health Intake	651-430-6561

### Additional resources:

<http://www.drugfree.org/prevent/>  
<http://www.timetotalk.org/>  
<http://www.theantidrug.com/>  
<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-hhw4-54.pdf>  
<http://wacy.org>

For a complete list of resources for teens, parent and other adults go to: [http://www.co.washington.mn.us/info\\_for\\_residents/public\\_health/](http://www.co.washington.mn.us/info_for_residents/public_health/)