# Prevent Youth Prescription Drug Misuse

Oakland County Youth Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Toolkit for Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers

## Did You Know

## Risk Factors/Warning Signs

## Talking to Your Kids

## What You Can Do/Prevention

## Resources

# Did You Know?

- Over 2,000 teens begin abusing prescription drugs each day.
- 56% of teens say it's easy to get prescription drugs from their parent's medicine cabinet.
- Four in 10 teens who have misused or abused a prescription drug got it from their parent's medicine cabinet. The majority of teens get prescription drugs from family and friends.
- 27% of teens mistakenly believe that misusing and abusing prescription drugs is safer than using street drugs.

- Teens most commonly abuse pain relievers (i.e. OxyContin® and Vicodin®), stimulants (i.e. Ritalin® and Adderall®), and sedatives and tranquilizers (i.e. Valium® and Xanax®).

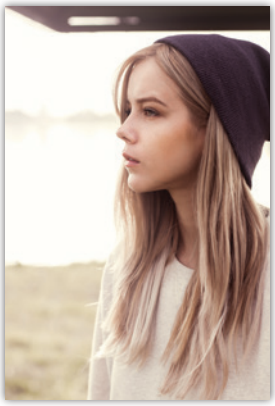
## Risk Factors

- Lack of parental supervision.
- Younger age (use commonly begins in teens and early 20s).
- Exposure to peer pressure or a social environment where there is drug use.
- Easy access to prescription drugs.
- Lack of knowledge about prescription drugs.
- Past or present addictions to other substances, including alcohol.

**Many teens say their parents are not discussing the dangers of prescription drug abuse with them**

## Warning Signs

- Missing medication from family members.
- Changes in appearance and behavior.
- Abrupt mood swings.
- Physical signs – constricted pupils, nausea, flushed skin.
- Excessive over-the-counter medicine use.
- Always looking for money.
- Trouble in school.
- Loss of interest in job, family, friends, exercise, hobbies, relationships, etc.
- Missing valuables.
- Unusual objects – straws, foil, burnt spoons.



# Risk Factors/Warning Signs

# Talking to Your Kids

Conversations can be a powerful tool parents can use to connect with and protect kids. When tackling tough topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, figuring out what to say can be challenging. Here are some conversation starters:

**Scenario:** You find out that kids are selling prescription drugs at your child's school. Your child hasn't mentioned it.

**What to say:** I heard there are kids selling pills at school – prescription medicine that either they are taking or someone in their family takes. Have you heard about kids doing this?

**Scenario:** Your teen has started to hang out with kids you don't know and dropped his old friends.

**What to say:** It seems like you are hanging out with a different crowd. Is there something up with your usual friends or are you just meeting some new kids? What are your new friends like? What do they like to do? What do you like about them?

**Scenario:** Your child tells you he was offered prescription medicine by a classmate – but said no.

**What to say:** Praise your child for making a good choice and telling you about it. Let him know that he can always blame you to get out of a bad situation. If you're ever offered drugs or someone else's medicine at school, tell that person, "My mother would kill me if I took that and then she wouldn't let me play baseball." You'll want to follow-up with the other parent and/or school.

Visit http://medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/parent_talk_kit.pdf for more conversation starters for any age.

# Safeguard Your Home

### Secure Medications in a Safe Place:

- Keep all medications in a safe place such as a locked cabinet or lock-box in a visible area of the house.
- Educate friends, family and others to secure medications.

### Monitor Medications:

- Track how many pills are in each prescription bottle or pack.
- Track refills for all medications in the household; including your teen's medications.
- Educate friends and family, especially grandparents, about regularly monitoring their medications.

**About half of parents say anyone can access their medicine cabinet.**

### Dispose of Old or Unused Medication Properly:

- Do not dispose of medication in the garbage, or in a sink or toilet.
- Visit a local prescription drug disposal site in Oakland County – Operation Medicine Cabinet™:

  http://www.oakgov.com/sheriff/Pages/community_services/OMC%20drop_off_sites.aspx
- Remove label from outside of prescription bottle before disposing to prevent illegal refills.

### Other Tips

- Talk to your children about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs. Let them know that experimenting with prescription drugs can lead to addiction, overdose or even death.
- Make sure teens understand abusing prescription drugs is illegal, including sharing them with friends.
- Be a positive role model when using prescription drugs yourself.
- Educate teens about following medication instructions and dosages.
- Supervise your child's activities, know who their friends are, and monitor their surroundings.

# Resources

**Oakland County Health Division PACE Program (Prior Authorization and Central Evaluation Program)**

PACE: substance abuse treatment services for income eligible Oakland County residents.

248-858-5200
www.oakgov.com/health/Pages/program_service/osas/osas_pace.aspx

After hours, call Common Ground at 248-456-0909 or toll-free 800-231-1127.

**Operation Medicine Cabinet™**

An Oakland County Sheriff's Office program, which partners with other law enforcement agencies, provides locations where citizens can properly dispose of expired and/or unused prescription drugs anonymously.
www.oakgov.com/sheriff/Pages/community_services/OMC%20drop_off_sites.aspx for disposal site locations.

**Be the Solution – Prevent Youth Prescription Drug Misuse**
For more resources, visit www.achcmi.org.

**Parent Talk Kit: Tips for Talking and What to Say to Prevent Drug and Alcohol Abuse**
medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/parent_talk_kit.pdf

**You're in Control: Using Prescription Medicine Responsibly**
store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA12-4678B3/SMA12-4678B3.pdf

**Drug Guide: A Parent's Guide to the Legal Drugs Kids are Using and Abusing**
www.drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/drug-guide-2.pdf

For a list of sources and more information, visit www.achcmi.org

## MYTH

Prescription painkillers, even if they are prescribed by a doctor, are not addictive.

## FACT

Prescription painkillers act on the same site in the brain as heroin and can be highly addictive.

## MYTH

There is nothing wrong with possessing prescription drugs without a prescription or sharing them with friends.

## FACT

Possessing prescription drugs without a prescription could result in criminal prosecution. Illegal distribution of prescription drugs is a Federal drug violation, punishable by up to five years in Federal prison.

## MYTH

Prescription medications are more difficult to obtain than illegal drugs.

## FACT

Youth report that these drugs are easily obtained from family and friends in medicine cabinets, kitchen cabinets, night stands and purses.

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CMH OAKLAND COUNTY AUTHORITY

Alliance of Coalitions ACHC for Healthy Communities

SHERIFF OAKLAND COUNTY

OAKLAND COUNTY MICHIGAN HEALTH DIVISION OakGov.com/Health

Federal, State and/or County funding has been provided through the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority Substance Use Disorder Services to support the project costs.