



The Coalition Newsletter

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Our vision is to prevent and reduce youth substance use & abuse in the Pequannock Twp. Community through collaboration, education and community-wide change.

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An Initiative of:



Painkillers are the most abused type of prescription drugs by 16-17 year olds, followed by stimulants, tranquilizers and sedatives. Almost 2 out of 5 teens report having friends that abuse prescription painkillers. Painkillers can cause drowsiness, inability to concentrate, apathy, lack of energy, constriction of the pupils, flushing of the face & neck, constipation, nausea, vomiting and respiratory depression. If a teen abused painkillers for a period of time, he can become addicted to the drug and experience withdrawal symptoms when he stops taking it. Associated with addiction is tolerance, which means more and more of the drug or a combination of drugs is needed to produce the same high, possibly leading to overdose.

Depressants, such as sedatives & tranquilizers have been growing in popularity among teens. In 2007, 6% of hs seniors reported abusing depressants, compared to 4% in 1995. **Psychological side effects** include poor concentration or feelings of confusion, impaired judgment & lowered inhibitions. Teens on barbiturates may experience depression, fatigue, confusion & irritability. **Physical side effects** include dilated pupils & slurred speech, relaxed muscles, intoxication, loss of motor coordination, fatigue, respiratory depression, sensory alteration & lowered blood pressure.

Stimulants are often abused for its ability to produce euphoric effect or to counteract sluggish feelings. **Physical side effects** include dilated pupils, decreased appetite, loss of coordination, increased heart & respiratory rate, elevated blood pressure, excessive sweating, chest pain with palpitations & flushed skin. **Psychological side effects** include feelings of restlessness, anxiety & delusions, hostility & aggression and panic, suicidal, suicidal or homicidal tendencies.

Visit www.theantidrug.com for more information, including drug interactions and street names of abused prescription drugs.

Preventing 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? The good news is that you can take steps immediately to limit access to these drugs and help keep your teen drug-free:

1. Safeguard all drugs at home. Monitor quantities and control access. Take note of how many pills are in a bottle or pill packet, and keep track of refills. This goes for your own medication, as well as for your teen and other members of your household. If you find you have to refill medication more often than expected, there could be a real problem—someone may be taking your medication without your knowledge. If your teen has been prescribed a drug, be sure you control the medication, and monitor dosages and refills.
2. Set clear rules for teens about all drug use, including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider's advice and dosages. Make sure your teen uses prescription drugs only as directed by a medical provider and follows instructions for OTC products carefully. This includes taking the proper dosage and not using with other substances without a medical provider's approval. Teens should never take prescription or OTC drugs with street drugs or alcohol. If you have any questions about how to take a drug, call your family physician or pharmacist.
3. Be a good role model by following these same rules with your own medicines. Examine your own behavior to ensure you set a good example. If you misuse your prescription drugs, such as share them with your kids, or abuse them, your teen will take notice. Avoid sharing your drugs and always follow your medical provider's instructions.
4. Safely dispose of unwanted prescription drugs. See the opposite page for details on an upcoming disposal event.
5. Ask friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs as well. Make sure your friends and relatives, especially grandparents, know about the risks, too, and encourage them to regularly monitor their own medicine cabinets. If there are other households your teen has access to, talk to those families as well about the importance of safeguarding medications. If you don't know the parents of your child's friends, then make an effort to get to know them, and get on the same page about rules and expectations for use of all drugs, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Follow up with your teen's school administration to find out what they are doing to address issues of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse in schools.

When abused, these powerful prescription and OTC drugs can be just as dangerous as street drugs. Talk to your teens about the dangers.

www.theantidrug.com

60% of High School Students Report Drugs Are Used, Kept or Sold in Their Schools

For the sixth year in a row, 60% or more of high school students report that drugs are used, kept or sold on their school grounds, according to a telephone survey of U.S. youth ages 12 to 17. While the percentage of students reporting that there are drugs in their school has decreased from the high of 66% in 2010 to 60% in 2012, the current percentage remains higher than a decade ago (44%.) The survey also found that 36% of high school students believe that it is fairly or very easy for students to smoke, drink or use drugs during the day at their school during the day without getting caught and more than half (52%) say that there is a place on school grounds or near their school where students go to smoke, drink or use drugs during the school day. www.casacolumbia.org

Facts about Rx Abuse

- ~ Every day, more than 2,000 kids use a prescription drug to get high for the first time.
- ~ Rx medicines are now the most commonly abused drugs among 12-13 year olds.
- ~ Unintentional drug poisoning is now the leading cause of accidental death—70 deaths a day—surpassing car accidents.
- ~ Health care costs related to Rx use and abuse is estimated at more than \$72 billion annually.

Helpful Links

- NJ Parent Link: www.njparentlink.nj.gov
- Parents — The Anti Drug: www.theantidrug.com
- Pequannock Township: www.peqtwp.org
- Pequannock Township Public Schools: www.pequannock.org
- Students Against Destructive Decisions: www.sadd.org

A Taskforce of:

