



Pills Can Kill

Prescription Drug Abuse Handbook



For a Drug-Free Doña Ana County



ABUSING PILLS

Prescription drug misuse and abuse is the intentional or unintentional use of medication without a prescription, in a way other than prescribed, or for the experience or feeling it causes. Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) indicate that about 15.3 million people aged 12 or older used pre-

scription drugs for non-medical reasons in the past year, and 6.5 million did so in the past month. This issue is a growing national problem in the United States. Prescription drugs are abused and misused more often than any other drug, except marijuana and alcohol. This growth is

fueled by misperceptions about their safety, increasing availability, and varied motivations for their use from countering anxiety and helping sleep problems to getting high. A 2011 analysis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that opioid analgesic (painkiller) sales

increased nearly four-fold between 1999 and 2010; this was paralleled by an almost four-fold increase in opioid (narcotic pain medication) overdose deaths and substance abuse treatment admissions almost six times the rate during the same time period.

Prescription drug abuse-related emergency department visits and

treatment admissions have risen significantly in recent years. Other negative outcomes that may result from prescription drug misuse and abuse include overdose and death, falls and fractures in older adults, and, for some, initiating injection drug use

with resulting risk for infections such as Hepatitis C and HIV. According to results from the 2013 NSDUH report, 12.5% of new illegal drug users began with prescription pain relievers.

High Schoolers use
Rx painkillers to get
high more than any
other drug except
marijuana.

Source: NM YRRS- Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey

Source: <http://www.samhsa.gov/prescription-drug-misuse-abuse>
Source: <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/drugabu>

Steps You Can Take To Safeguard the Medicine in Your Home



1. Monitor

Always know how many pills are in your prescription bottles; keep a written inventory to keep track.

Keep track of your refills— both for your own medicine and for your children and other members of your household. Needing to get refills more often than you should is a red flag.

Pay especially close attention to medications that are commonly abused (stimulants, sedatives, and tranquilizers— ask your doctor or pharmacist if any of the medicines you get fit these categories.)



2. Secure

Purchase a Prescript Lockbox and ensure that all of your medications are not accessible to anyone other than you.

Tell relatives, friends and grandparents to lock up all of their prescription medications.

Tell to your child's friends parents about the dangers of prescription and non-prescription medications and encourage them to purchase a lockbox.

Keep your medicines in a secure place



3. Dispose

Count the number of pills you have and keep track of them to make sure none disappear

Do not leave your medicines in your bathroom medicine cabinet.

Do NOT flush or pour your medications down the toilet or sink! Do NOT contaminate lakes, rivers, reservoirs or streams.



MONITOR MEDICATIONS

Would you know if your pills were missing?

Always know how many pills are in your prescription bottles; keep a written inventory to keep track.

Keep track of your refills— both for your own medicine and for your children and other members of your household. Needing to get refills more often than you should is a red flag.

Pay especially close attention to medications that are commonly abused (stimulants, sedatives, and tranquilizers— ask your doctor or pharmacist if any of the medicines you get fit these categories.)



Safeguard My Meds

Medicine Inventory Sheet

Help prevent the abuse and misuse of prescription medicines to keep them safe.
Store your prescription medicines to keep them safe
Never share your medicines with anyone— never take medicine that wasn't intended for you.
See the following pages to learn about how to dispose of your medicines properly.

Name of Family Member	Medication Name	Date Received	Dosage Strength	Quantity in Bottle	Frequency (how often taken)	Reason for Taking	Prescribing Physician	Discard By

DISPOSING OF MEDICATIONS

Solid Medications

(Pills or Capsules)

Place tablets and capsules in a disposable container such as a plastic milk container or two-liter bottle.

Add water with bleach to the container until contents are completely covered.

Close the lid of container and secure with duct or packing tape. Place the container in the trash.

Liquid Medications

Add cat litter, dirt or any other substance (i.e.: coffee grounds, saw dust, sand, flour) to prevent someone from using the medication.

Close the lid of the disposable container or medication container and secure with duct or packing tape.

Place the container in the trashcan for disposal at the landfill.



Dispose My Meds. Available at <http://disposemymeds.org> Accessed Feb. 15, 2011. Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010 Available at http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/non_registrant/s_3397.pdf Accessed Feb 15, 2011 Office of National Drug Control Policy. Teens and Prescription Drugs. Available at http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/TEENS_AND_PRESCRIPTION_DRUGS.pdf Accessed Feb 15, 2011 NAAG. Drug Takeback Programs- National Day Planned. Available at <http://www.naag.org/drug-takeback-programs-national-day-planned.php> Accessed April 13, 2015. DEA. Drug Disposal. Available at http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html Accessed April 13, 2015

New Mexico Board of Pharmacy. Drug Disposal. Available at <http://www.rld.state.nm.us/pharmacy/disposal.html> Accessed Feb 15 2011 Arthritis. How to Safely Dispose of Unused Medications. Available at <http://arthritis.about.com/od/arthritismedications/ht/disposemeds.htm?p=1> Accessed Feb 15, 2011 Prescription Drug Abuse. How to Safely Dispose of Post-treatment Medications. Available at <http://prescription-drug-abuse.com/drug-abuse-articles/how-to-safely-dispose-of-post-treatment> Accessed Feb 15, 2011. USA Today AP. Drugs found in drinking water. Available at http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-03-10-drugs-tap-water_N.htm Accessed Feb 15, 2011

SHARING IS NOT CARING

Parents may be sending mixed signals to teens, as 1 in 5 parents indicate that they have given their teen a prescription drug that was not prescribed to them.

Practical Advice for Parents

As a parent, teach your teen to:

- Respect the power of medicine and use it properly
 - Recognize that all medicines, including prescription and over-the-counter medications including vitamins, and herbals, have risks along with benefits. The risks tend to increase dramatically when medicines are abused.
 - Take responsibility for learning how to take prescription medicines safely and appropriately, and seek help at the first sign of a problem for their own or a friend's abuse.
- peer pressure and what to do when faced with such a situation.
 - Medications are powerful drugs that can be very beneficial when taken properly under a doctor's supervision, but experimenting with prescription drugs, even once, can lead to an overdose or death.
 - Explain that these risks increase dramatically when drugs and/or alcohol are mixed.

Communication is KEY!

Take time to talk to your teen so that they know the following:

- Taking ANY prescription medication that is not prescribed to them by a doctor is drug abuse and it is dangerous.
- Be aware of the kinds of parties your children go to. "Skittles" parties where kids experiment with their grandparents' or parents' medications can have fatal consequences. Talk to them about how to handle

Did you know?

Some cough and cold medicines have ingredients that can alter the mind when taken at a higher-than-recommended doses and are abused by teens because of this effect.

Over-the-Counter Medications

Some cold medications to be aware of are cough suppressants such as dextromethorphan (Delsym®) and promethazine (Phenergan®) or codeine combinations (e.g. T#3, Tylenol #3, Soma®) as well as the expectorant guaifenesin (Mucinex®). Dextromethorphan and guaifenesin and their combinations (e.g. Corcidin HBP®, Triaminic®, Vick's Nyquil®, Dimetapp®) can be easily



bought at any drug store, but codeine combinations are harder to buy because you need a prescription.

Children and teens who abuse medications such as cough and cold medicines call this practice **robotripping** or **skittling**. To avoid nausea caused by high doses of guaifenesin, young people may instead abuse Coricidin HBP Cough and Cold capsules (a.k.a. C-C-C or triple-C). Drinking promethazine-codeine cough syrup mixed with soda or alcohol (a combination called syrup, sizzurp, purple drank, barre, or lean) can be extremely dangerous.

Some health effects of abusing cough and cold medicines are the following:

- Decreased motor function
- Numbness
- Nausea/vomiting
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Extreme agitation
- Increased body temperature
- Build-up of too much acid in bodily fluids
- Liver damage
- Inability to get enough oxygen to the brain
- Problems breathing and/or lack of oxygen to the brain

<http://medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/SMA12-4676B1.pdf> <https://ncadd.org/learn-about-drugs/faqs/facts>
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/cough-cold-medicine-abuse>



MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

If your child is taking a prescription or nonprescription medication, your child must have a signed Public School District Emergency Medical Card completed which states all medications taken by your child. A written order from your child's Healthcare Provider is required for all prescription. If medications must be given during school hours, written policy and state laws must be followed. This applies to prescription and nonprescription medications alike.

More than 7 percent of American school children are taking at least one medication for emotional or behavioral difficulties and approximately 81% of children with emotional or behavioral problems have been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) at some point in their lives.
(Use of Medication Prescribed for Emotional or Behavioral Difficulties Among Children Aged 6-17 years in the United States, 2011-2012)

Ask your pharmacist to provide two medication containers, one for home and one for school with medication administration instructions.

Prescription medication(s) will need to be labeled with the Healthcare Providers information, the name of the child, name of medication, dosage, and time to be administered.

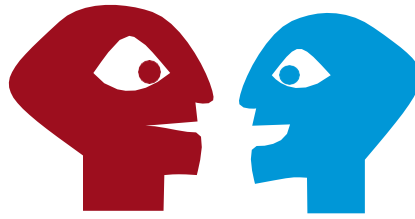
Any classified controlled substance is not allowed to be carried by a student or minor to school.

All medications are in a secure medicine cabinet with the exception of emergency medications.

If possible, all medications should be given at home under the supervision of a parent or legal guardian.

If you need to contact the Public School Nursing Services for more information, please call and ask to be directed to Nursing Services or speak to your local school health assistant. The policy for administration of medications may vary from school to school, so talk to your local school nursing services to get the most accurate information.

LEARN MORE about medications for childhood emotional and behavioral problems from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry website: www.aacap.org



WHAT CAN I DO AS A PARENT?

Can talking with your children help prevent them from abusing prescription medications? **Yes!**

When children are taught about the dangers and risks of drugs in the home they are 50% less likely to abuse those drugs; however, only 22% of teenagers say they have ever had a conversation with their parents about the dangers of taking prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription.

How do you start a conversation with your teen about the dangers of prescription drugs?

Don't have the "big drug talk." Talk to your children in smaller, frequent conversations about the harm of drugs in an age-appropriate way.

Find out what your children already know. What have they learned about drugs and prescription drugs at school? From their friends?

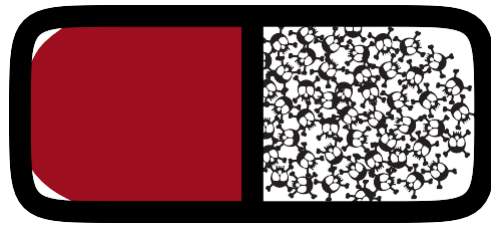
Set a clear understanding with your family about the expectations around all substance abuse. Children often will fall back on family rules about substance abuse when they are offered drugs.

Check out the web for booklets that can walk parents or grandparents through these conversations, such as the *Family Checkup—Positive Parenting Prevents Drug Abuse* from www.drugabuse.gov/family-checkup and http://medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/Parent_talk_kit_2014_.pdf

Other things parents and grandparents can do:

Get to know your children and their friends. When children feel like they have a close relationship with their parents they are less likely to disappoint them.

Be a good example! Prescription drug abuse is a problem for adults as well. 27% of parents state that they have taken prescription drugs without a prescription from their doctor. This sets a dangerous example. Be a good role model and don't take prescription medications that your doctor did not prescribe for you.



Signs and Symptoms of Addiction

Did you know?

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), one hundred people die from drug overdoses every day in the United States.

How do prescriptions painkiller deaths occur?

Prescription painkillers affect pain receptors in the brain so that the feeling of physical pain is less intense. As a result, these drugs can create a 'high' or feeling of euphoria. Also, they can cause physical dependence which can lead to addiction.

A person who is abusing prescription painkillers can overload the receptors in the brain making them less sensitive to the effect of the painkiller. As a result, a person will need to take more and more painkillers to feel that 'high' or euphoria. Since their body has become used to the painkiller, the body may go

into withdrawal if they do not continue taking the amount their body has become used to. Some signs of withdrawal are the following: anxiety, sweating, seizures, tremors, difficulty breathing, insomnia. Large doses of painkillers can also cause a person's breathing to slow down so much that they can stop breathing, resulting in an overdose.

Empower Yourself!

Recognizing the Signs of Prescription Drug Abuse

The best way to prevent prescription drug abuse is to first educate yourself. That way, you can accurately and adequately present the facts when talking to your child.

Sources found on p.5

Signs of Drug Abuse:

- Fatigue, red or glazed eye, and repeated health complaints
- Sudden mood changes, including irritability, negative attitude, personality changes and general lack of interest in hobbies/activities
- Secretiveness and withdrawing from family
- Sleeping excessively or at unusual times
- Cash, valuables or medication missing from the home
- Additional filled prescriptions on your pharmacy record that you did not order
- Loss of interest in appearance, sports, or social activities

GET HELP!

If you think your child has a problem with prescription medicine abuse, please visit drugfree.org/get-help or call Parents toll free helpline to speak to a parent specialist at 1-855-DRUGFREE (1-855-378-4373)

What are the risks?

There are both immediate and long-term risks to prescription drug abuse. In the short term, overdosing can be fatal and lead to death. In the longer term, prescription painkillers have been proven to be addictive. Relying on prescription medications at a young age to help 'manage' life's struggles can establish a lifelong pattern of dependency and prevent teens from learning coping skills.

Sources found on p.5

Commonly Abused Medications

Opioids

Derived from the opium poppy (or synthetic versions of it) and used for pain relief.

Examples include hydrocodone (Vicodin), Oxycodone (Oxycotin, Percocet), fentanyl (Duragesic, Fentora), methadone, and codeine.

Benzodiazepines

Central nervous system depressants used as sedatives, to induce sleep, prevent seizures, and relieve anxiety. Examples include alprazolam (Xanax), diazepam (Valium), and lorazepam (Ativan).

Amphetamine-like drugs

Central nervous system stimulants used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Examples include dextroamphetamine/ amphetamine (Adderall, Adderall XR), and methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta).

In 2011, NM was the second highest state for deaths caused by drug overdose.

In Doña Ana County, 1 in 5 deaths by unintentional overdose were caused by prescription opioids (painkillers).

Source: New Mexico Substance Abuse Epidemiology Profile
Substance Abuse Epidemiology Section
Injury and Behavioral Epidemiology Bureau
Epidemiology and Response Division
New Mexico Department of Health
August 2014

Sources for *Disposing of Medication* Section, pp. 5

Dispose My Meds. Available at <http://disposemy meds.org> Accessed Feb. 15, 2011. Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010 Available at http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/non_registrant/s_3397.pdf Accessed Feb 15, 2011 Office of National Drug Control Policy. Teens and Prescription Drugs. Available at http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/TEENS_AND_PRESCRIPTION_DRUGS.pdf Accessed Feb 15, 2011
NAAG. Drug Takeback Programs- National Day Planned. Available at <http://www.naag.org/drug-takeback-programs-national-day-planned.php> Accessed April 13, 2015.

RESOURCE PAGE

National Resources

National Institute on Drug Abuse

NIDA— Family Checkup

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

PACT 360— Community Education Programs

Partnership for drug free kids

Parent Talk Kit PDF

www.drugabuse.gov

www.drugabuse.gov/family-checkup

www.cdc.gov

<http://pact360.org/home>

<http://medicineabuseproject.org/>

http://medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/Parent_talk_kit_2014_.pdf

Toll-Free Parent Help Line:

1-855-DRUGFREE (378-4272)

www.drugfree.org/get-help/helpline/

Local Resources

Las Cruces Drug & Alcohol

Rehab Center

3003 Hillrise Dr.

Las Cruces, NM 88011

575-303-6893

Doña Ana County Sheriff's

Office

845 N. Motel Blvd

Las Cruces, NM 88007

575-525-1911

Las Cruces Police

Department

217 E. Picacho Ave

Las Cruces, NM 88001

575-528-4200

Mesilla Valley Hospital

3751 Del Rey Blvd.

Las Cruces, NM 88012

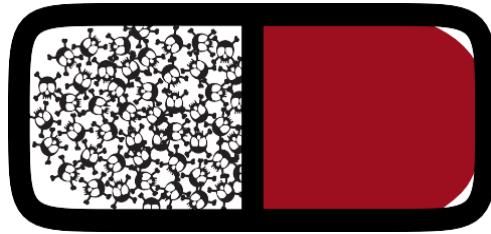
575-382-3500

If you or a family member is facing a substance abuse or mental health issue, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration at 1-800-662-HELP (4357)



For a Drug-Free Doña Ana County

Stand UP! Speak UP! What's UP!



Members and Collaborating Agencies

The Wright Group, Inc.
Women's Intercultural Center
New Mexico Department of Health
Office of School and Adolescent Health
Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program
Paso Del Norte Health Foundation Shift Positive Initiative
Mesilla Valley Hospital
Mesilla Valley DWI Resource Center
Boys & Girls Club of Las Cruces
NMSU Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education Program
NMSU Pre-Pharmacy Society
Las Cruces Police Department
Doña Ana County Sheriff's Office
Bravo Mic Communications
Adams Radio
So Who Enterprises, Inc.
Elks Lodge
Las Cruces Public Schools
Doña Ana County District Attorney
City of Sunland Park
NM National Guard Counter Drug Task Force
Doña Ana County Health and Human Services Dept.
Doña Ana County Constituent Services Dept.

Contact us at:

575-534-0101

Ext 2119



The UP! Coalition is an initiative of:

