



Prescription drug misuse occurs when a person takes a prescription medication that is not prescribed for him/her, or takes it for reasons or in dosages other than as prescribed. The nonmedical use of prescription medications has increased in the past decade and has surpassed all illicit drug usage except marijuana in the United States. Misuse of prescription drugs can produce serious health effects, including addiction.

One of the most striking aspects of the misuse of prescriptions has been the change in the consumption of opioids.

- Prescription analgesics overdoses killed nearly 15,000 people in the US in 2008, more than 3 times the 4000 killed by these medications in 1999 (CDC Vital Signs 11/2011)
- In 2011, 6.1 million (2.4 percent) persons age 12 or older misused or abused some type of prescription drug in the past month. These estimates were lower than the estimates in 2010 (7.0 million or 2.7 percent). (NSDUH 2011)
- The majority of both teens and young adults obtain prescription drugs they misuse from friends and relatives, sometimes without their knowledge.
- Despite what many teens and adults think, abusing prescription drugs is not safer than misusing illicit drugs.
- Nonmedical use of prescription drugs among youth ages 12 to 17 and young adults ages 18 to 25 in 2011 was the second most prevalent illicit drug use category, with marijuana being first. (NSDUH 2011)

The following organizations offer information and resources that can help you and your family.



**1-877-8-HOPENY**  
Find Help for **1-877-846-7369**  
Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Problem Gambling

**New York State Office of  
Alcoholism and Substance  
Abuse Services**

[www.oasas.ny.gov](http://www.oasas.ny.gov)  
518-473-3460

**The Partnership at  
Drugfree.org**

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)  
855-378-4373

**Al-Anon and Alateen**

[www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)  
757-563-1600

**SAMHSA's Center for  
Substance Abuse Treatment**

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)  
240-276-1660

**Substance Abuse and  
Mental Health Services**

877-SAMHSA-7

**National Institute  
on Drug Abuse**

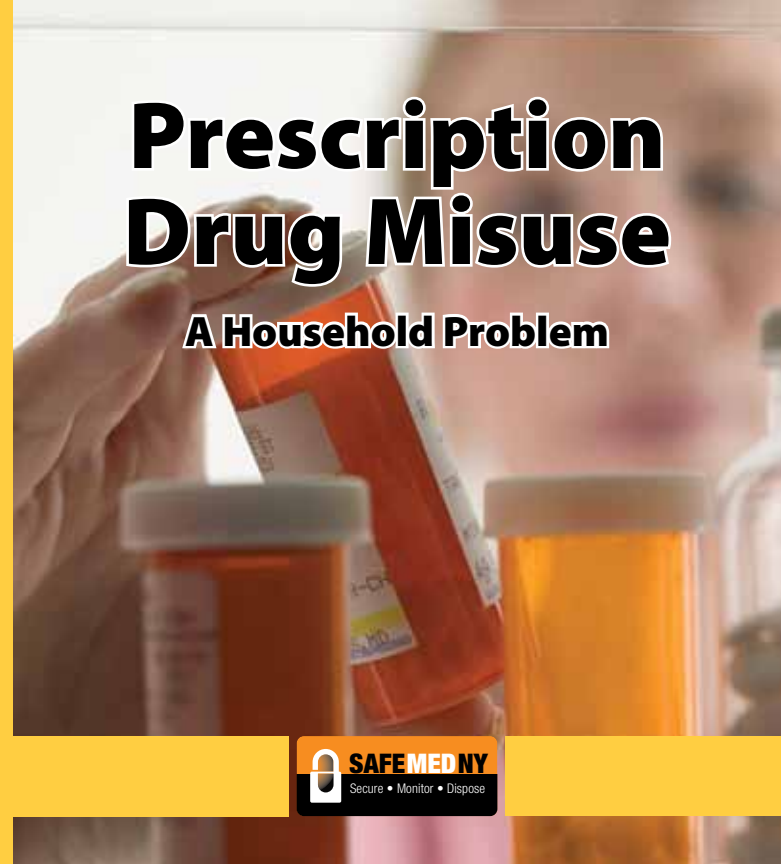
[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)  
800-662-HELP

**National Council on  
Alcohol & Drug Dependence**

[www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)  
800-NCACALL

# Prescription Drug Misuse

## A Household Problem



**SAFE MED NY**  
Secure • Monitor • Dispose

# Classification of Commonly Abused Prescription Drugs

## OPIOIDS

*indicated for pain include:*

Hydrocodone (Vicodin)  
Oxycodone (Oxycontin)  
Oxymorphone (Opana)  
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)  
Meperidine (Demerol)  
Diphenoxylate  
Codeine  
Fentanyl  
Morphine  
Opium and any other drug  
with morphine-like effects

## DEPRESSANTS

*indicated for anxiety and sleep disorders include:*

Barbiturates  
Pentobarbital sodium  
(Nembutal)  
Benzodiazepines  
Diazepam (Valium)  
Alprazolam (Xanax)  
Clonazepam (Klonopin)

## STIMULANTS

*indicated for ADHD include:*

Dextroamphetamine  
(Dexedrine)  
Methylphenidate  
(Ritalin and Concerta)  
Amphetamines (Adderall)

# Misusing Prescriptions Can Be Addictive and Deadly

## Loss of tolerance

Regular use of opioids leads to greater tolerance. For example, more is needed to achieve the same effect (high). Overdoses occur when people begin to use again. This is usually following a period of not using (abstinence) such as after coming out of treatment.

## Mixing drugs

Mixing opioids with other drugs, especially depressants such as benzodiazepines (Xanax, Klonopin) or alcohol can lead to an accidental overdose, respiratory problems and death. The effect of mixing drugs is greater than the effect one would expect if taking the drugs separately.

## Variation in strength of street drugs

Street drugs may vary in strength and effect based on the purity.

## Serious illness

Users with serious illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, liver disease, diabetes and/or heart disease are at greater risk for overdose.

# Prevent Prescription Drug Misuse

## Lock Your Meds

Prevent your children from misusing your medication by securing them in places your child cannot access.

## Take Inventory

Download the Medicine Cabinet Inventory sheet, write down the name and amount of medications you currently have and check regularly to ensure that nothing is missing. [www.oasas.ny.gov/publications/pdf/MedicineCabBrochure.pdf](http://www.oasas.ny.gov/publications/pdf/MedicineCabBrochure.pdf)

## Educate Yourself & Your Child

Learn about the most commonly misused types of prescription medications (pain relievers, sedatives, stimulants and tranquilizers). Then communicate the dangers to your child regularly; once is not enough.

## Set Clear Rules & Monitor Behavior

Express your disapproval regarding the inappropriate and dangerous use of medications without a prescription. Monitor your child's behavior to ensure that the rules are being followed.

## Pass It On

Share your knowledge, experience and support with the parents of your child's friends. Together, you can create a tipping point for change and raise safe, healthy and drug-free children.

**Properly Dispose of Old and Unused Medications**

