

# Is Your Medicine Cabinet Safe?

## Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicine Misuse

To download a useful tracking tool for your own medicine cabinet, visit the OASAS website at [www.oasas.ny.gov/stoprpxmisuse/index.cfm](http://www.oasas.ny.gov/stoprpxmisuse/index.cfm)

With this tool, you can list your prescriptions, the date filled, the expiration date, and original quantity. Once a week, count the pills remaining and mark the date.



Find Help for  
Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Problem Gambling



New York State  
Office of Alcoholism and  
Substance Abuse Services  
[www.oasas.ny.gov](http://www.oasas.ny.gov)



New York State  
Department of Health  
[www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov)



New York State  
Office of Mental Health  
[www.omh.ny.gov](http://www.omh.ny.gov)



New York State Police  
[www.troopers.ny.gov](http://www.troopers.ny.gov)



New York State  
Division of Criminal  
Justice Services  
[www.criminaljustice.ny.gov](http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov)

# Prescription Safety

**What you need to know  
when you take a prescription home**

# Prescription Drug Misuse

Most people take prescriptions responsibly under a doctor's care. However, there has been a steady increase in the nonmedical use of medications, especially by adolescents and young adults.

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 prescribed. The non-medical use of prescription medications has increased in the past decade and has surpassed all illicit drugs except marijuana in the United States. Misuse of prescription drugs can produce serious health effects, including addiction.

Commonly misused prescription medications include those that are intended to relieve pain, anxiety and sleep disorder.

## Why should you be concerned?

- Despite what many teens and adults think, abusing prescription drugs is *not* safer than misusing illicit drugs.
- Prescription drug misuse may begin with inappropriate prescribing or lack of patient compliance with medication regimens. Continued misuse may lead to abuse and dependence.
- Federal Drug Abuse Warning Network data consistently shows the increasing involvement of prescription drugs in emergency department visits related to both drug misuse or abuse and adverse reactions.



## Remember

- Prescription drug misuse is on the rise and has resulted in unintended drug addiction and death.
- Ask your provider if any of the medications prescribed for your family have a potential for abuse.
- Medication is intended only for the person for whom it was prescribed.
- Never share medications.
- Don't mix medications. Speak to your health care provider about all medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medications.
- Medications are unsafe when not taken as prescribed.
- Store all medications in one designated location, in a dry and cool place. The kitchen and bathroom are bad places to store medication because of the heat and moisture generated.
- Be sure the medication location is safe and secure, away from children, adolescents and others.
- Routine tracking of all medication is a good idea, especially when others live with or visit you.
- Discuss the importance of safely using medications with family and friends.