



Pathway to Prevention

Educating Parents about Prevention of Teen Drug & Alcohol Abuse



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What's the risk with prescription pain medications prescribed by a doctor?

Prescription pain medication, when abused, poses a very real danger to young people. Teens and parents tend to overlook the potential danger, thinking prescription pills are "safe" under any circumstance because they are prescribed by a doctor. Pain pills are widely available - often as close as your own medicine cabinet, and there is little stigma to their use. Unaware of the dangers of mixing drugs with alcohol, teens may combine prescription painkillers with other drugs or alcohol. Worst of all, evidence suggests that teens who become chemically dependent upon prescription pain pills often resort to using heroin when their pill supply dries up.

As heroin use has become more mainstream, the image of the typical heroin "junkie" no longer fits. Heroin, an "equal opportunity" drug that is abused across the socio-economic spectrum, is destroying young lives in suburban towns across the country. One young woman brings that devastation home in the [9-minute trailer](#) for the ***Collision Course - Teen Addiction Epidemic*** documentary, which has now been viewed almost 100,000 times on YouTube.

While the recreational use of pain pills has declined among our nation's youth over the past decade, the [Monitoring the Future report](#) for 2014 revealed that 6.1%

Tip of the Month

Is that a vitamin or a prescription pain pill in my teen's backpack?

Commonly abused opioid pain meds include Oxycontin, Vicodin, Norco, Opana and Percocet. The physical appearance of prescription pills can be different from year to year, so use an [online pill identifier](#) to figure out what you're looking at.

How about a "language identifier?" What is the teen drug lingo these days?

Street names for prescription opioids include Hillbilly Heroin, Oxy, Roxy, OC, Oxycotton, Percs, Happy Pills, and Vikes.

Heroin street names include Smack, Junk, H, Black tar, Ska, Horse and Brown.

We need your support!

Help us create a community where teens "Choose NOT to

of high school seniors had used non-prescribed narcotics other than heroin over the prior year. That translates to one out of 17 teens playing with fire and facing dangerous risks associated with prescription pain medication abuse. Through education and awareness, we can stop this abuse before it takes a deadly toll.

Sincerely,

Kim Box

Executive Director, Pathway to Prevention

Parting Notes

Precautions to take and conversations to have

1. Pain pills command a high price on the open market, so teens may steal and sell them, or guests or workers in your home may walk away with them. Count your prescription pills and watch for any missing doses. Better yet, keep them under lock and key. Make sure Grandma and Grandpa do the same.
2. If your child is prescribed pain medication, talk with doctor and obtain the bare minimum necessary to manage the pain. Ask for a non-prescription alternative instead. Closely monitor how and when any prescription medication is taken.
3. Talk with your teen about the dangers of prescription pills. Read our Parent Awareness Report on "Reducing the Risks and Talking with your Teen about Drugs and Alcohol," which you can download in [English](#) or [Spanish](#). Make sure your teen knows that that opioids can be dangerous, especially when combined with alcohol or other drugs, even when prescribed by a doctor.
4. Keep an eye out for pills in baggies or vitamin bottles in your child's backpack, purse, sports bag, or in pockets of clothes hanging in the closet, behind books on the bookshelf or tucked into socks or shoes.
5. If your teen shows signs of intoxication, start drug testing him or her. Tell your teens that drinking or doing drugs is not tolerated and that you will drug test them randomly in the future. Then follow up; no idle threats! This may give your

use." We welcome your [tax-deductible contributions](#).

Join Our Mailing List!



Need Help?

What do you do if you discover your child is using opioids or other drugs?

The [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) is a good place to start looking for resources to help if your teen or young adult has a problem with drugs.

If you find that your child is abusing drugs or alcohol, reach out for confidential online support by parents, for parents at [ParentPathway.com](#).



child a welcome face-saving "out" to peers who are pressuring them to use or abuse. Let them save face while bowing out of the party scene by blaming a drug-testing mom or dad.

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