



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at Veritas Risk Services

A recent study indicated that one in six teens has taken a prescription medication that was not prescribed to them at least once.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH: PRESCRIPTION DRUG SAFETY

While drug abuse is common among teens, a growing trend is the abuse of prescription medications, which can be just as dangerous as illicit drugs, but more readily available. Parents should take precautions to keep their children safe.

Commonly Abused Drugs

A large variety of prescription drugs are abused, including painkillers, depressants (such as sleeping pills), stimulants (such as medications for ADHD or asthma), steroids and more. In addition, over-the-counter (OTC) drugs such as cold medicine and diet pills are often abused by teens.

Risks

Prescription and OTC drugs can be just as dangerous as illicit ones, even though they are either prescribed by doctors or available in stores. These legal drugs can be extremely dangerous when taken in excess, and may cause addiction, serious illness or even death.

It's unclear if teens choose to abuse prescription and OTC drugs because they think they are safer than other drugs, or simply because they are more available. Many children and teens may try drugs out of peer pressure, curiosity or misinformation. Unfortunately, all parents today need to consider taking steps to keep their medications safe to prevent abuse and misuse.

Precautions

Consider taking the following steps to safeguard against medication abuse in your household:

- Monitor all prescription medications. Pay attention to how many pills are left and how often you expect to refill.

- Explain to kids that all medications should only be taken as instructed by a doctor and/or the label, and that prescription drugs should never be shared.
- Dispose of old medications. If you throw them in the trash, conceal them to discourage individuals from removing them later.
- Talk to your children about the dangers of abusing drugs, and explain that prescriptions and OTCs can be just as dangerous as illegal drugs.
- If you are concerned that someone in your house is abusing prescription or OTC drugs, consider hiding medications or securing them in a locked space.

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