

## Prescription Drug Abuse Among Teens

Teen use of cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs is down. Teen smoking is actually at its lowest rate since the survey began. Anabolic steroid use, primarily by boys, is also down. The use of illegal drugs like LSD and the party drugs like Ecstasy remains low. Alcohol use by teens continues to decline. Still, 17% of 8th graders, 33% of 10th graders and 47% of 12th graders report drinking alcohol.

While these statistics are good news, several areas of increased drug use are a cause of concern. Abuse of inhalants rose by .9% among 12th graders. Also, teens increased their abuse of prescription drugs like painkillers, sedatives, and barbiturates. Among seniors, 9.5% use the painkiller Vicodin and 5.5% use OxyContin. OxyContin use by 12th graders is up 40% in 3 years.

Abuse of prescription drugs is dangerous. It can be fatal. Oxycontin treats pain. If used as directed, patients are less likely to become addicted.

It is highly addictive when abused. Teens crush the 12-hour time-release pills and snort them. The drug hits them all at once instead of a little bit of the drug over 12 hours.

Teens find these painkillers in their homes. Parents keep these drugs in the kitchen or bathroom cabinet. Kids take these drugs and use it and/or sell it. On the street, kids may pay up to \$80 per pill. Because it costs so much, kids often steal to get money to buy the drug.

Teens do not think OxyContin is dangerous. After all, doctors prescribe it. Their mom and dad take it. That makes it seem safe.

Some kids think that they will not get addicted unless they put the drug into their vein with a needle. Doctors say OxyContin addiction can stay with someone for years. Some kids turn to heroin because it satisfies their addiction, and it is cheaper.

Parents' words and actions do prevent drug abuse. Make sure your teens get the message about the dangers of prescription medications.

*Taken from a report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse*



Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.  
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.