

# Prescription Drugs



**Question:** “Who’s your dealer, man, where do you get your drugs from?”

**Answer :** “My Mom and Dad”

Sounds like a line from a teen comedy, but the scary truth is some of the most serious problems with drug abuse come from medications youths get from their parents, grandparents and siblings. Bottles left lying around in the bathroom medicine cabinet have started all too many youngsters off on the road to addiction.

Many parents talk to their kids about street drugs - and warn them about how dangerous it is to start taking these substances. But relatively few parents ever talk to their kids about prescription drugs. This is extremely unfortunate, because both kids and parents need to be aware of the myths and misunderstandings surrounding prescription drugs.

## Overcoming the Myths

**Myth #1:** Prescription drugs aren't like street drugs. They are prescribed by a doctor so they are okay.

**Fact:** Prescription drugs are prescribed to **specific** patients to treat **specific** conditions. Doctors know about a patient's medical background when they prescribe these drugs. Parents and siblings can't simply hand a bottle of pills over to a youngster and say “try these, they worked for me.”



**Myth # 2:** *You aren't as likely to overdose on prescription drugs.*

**Fact:** More people die from overdoses of prescription drugs than from street drugs. Three of the most commonly misused prescription drugs are Xanax, Vicodin and OxyContin. Xanax is used to treat panic & anxiety, while Vicodin and OxyContin are used to treat mild to severe pain. These three drugs alone now cause more deaths annually from overdoses than heroin and cocaine combined.

**Myth # 3:** *"Good" kids wouldn't abuse prescription drugs.*

**Fact:** "Good" kids are, if anything, more likely to abuse prescription drugs. Imagine you have a daughter who is a straight A student and who is planning to become a lawyer. She isn't going to want to ruin her potential career by getting a criminal record for possession of a controlled substance. But if she thinks she can escape from the pressure of studying and exams by borrowing some pills from Mom and Dad, what's the harm?



Narcotic pain relievers now cause or contribute to nearly

**3 OUT OF 4**

Prescription Drug overdoses and about

**15,500 DEATHS**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



**Myth # 4:** *You can use prescription drugs that aren't prescribed to you as a study aid or a sleep medication.*

**Fact:** Users don't know what potential side-effects these medications may have. These days, everybody wants an edge. Just as athletes take steroids to get stronger, some students without medical conditions take drugs like Ritalin to help them with their studies. Ritalin is fine when it is used for patients with Attention Deficit Disorder to help them pay attention and focus. But it can have a lot of unexpected and unwanted side-effects when used by people who don't suffer from this sort of disorder. What's more, their use of the drug is not being monitored by physicians who know what sort of side-effects to look for.

The same danger applies to drugs that are misused as sleep aids. A youngster prescribed painkillers for dental surgery may "borrow" some pills from his parents long after the pain subsides because he finds they make him drowsy and help him to sleep at night. He may not realize the damage these medications inflict on his liver and other organs when he continues taking them over the long run.

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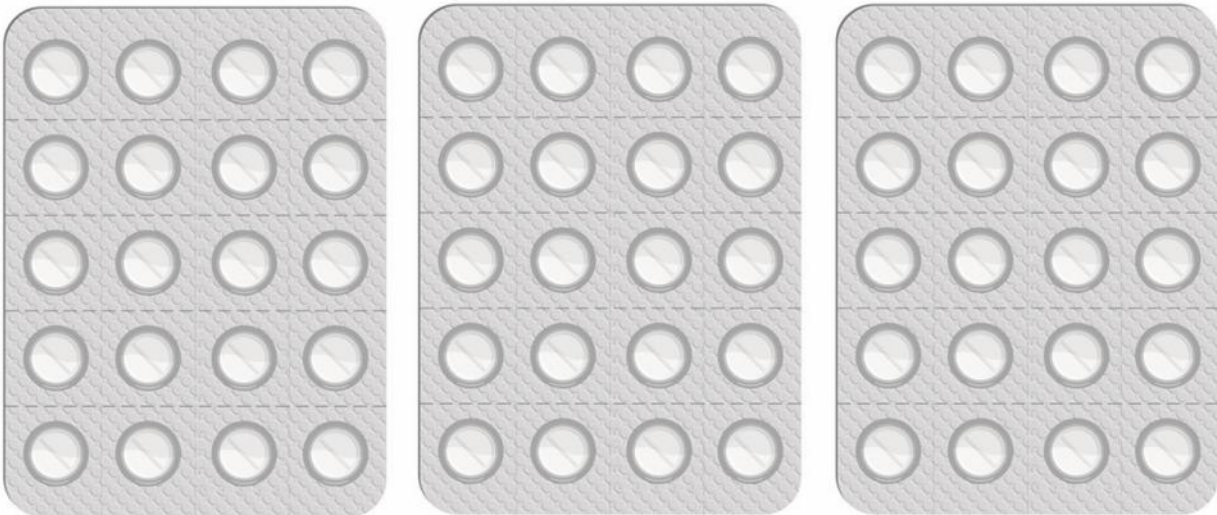
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## Bubble Packs

Lets say you have a standard container from a drug store containing two hundred Tylenol 3 pills or two hundred valium pills. You almost certainly aren't going to notice if two or three of them happen to go missing. In fact, you might not even notice if ten or twenty of them go missing. That could be enough medication to lead to a serious overdose, possibly even a fatal overdose, in the case of a youngster whose body isn't used to opiates!

Many pharmacies put pills in bubble packs so it is easy for a patient to know if they have taken their medication for the day. If these medications are punched out of the package, it's immediately obvious, and parents will know somebody else has been using their medication. There's no reason patients can't also use bubble packs for "as needed" medications such as painkillers. It's a lot easier to recognize if pills have been punched out of a package than it is to open a vial and count out every pill.



**She gets her hair from her mom. Her eyes from her dad.  
And her drugs from her grandma's medicine cabinet.**

70% of people 12 and older who abuse prescription drugs get them from family or friends. Prevent your children from abusing your own medication by securing your meds in places your child cannot access.

**BE AWARE. DON'T SHARE.**

For more information, visit [www.lockyourmeds.org](http://www.lockyourmeds.org) and [www.mysac.org](http://www.mysac.org)