



DRUG FACT SHEET

Prescription Drugs

More teens abuse prescription drugs than any illicit drug except marijuana.



Classes of drug:

Painkillers: Vicodin, Tylenol with Codeine, OxyContin, Percocet

Depressants: Klonopin, Nembutal, Soma, Valium, Xanax

Stimulants: Adderall, Concerta, Dexedrine, Ritalin

What it looks like: They come in tablet and capsule form (some depressants are also available in liquid and suppositories). They are taken orally or crushed, dissolved in water and injected.

Sources of drug for nonmedical use: Of people who abuse prescription painkillers, 56 percent say they get them free from relatives and friends; 19 percent from one doctor; 9 percent bought them from friends or relatives; 5 percent bought from drug dealer; 4 percent stole from friends or relatives and 7 percent from other sources.

Withdrawal symptoms:

Painkillers: Restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia

Depressants: Anxiety, irritability, insomnia, nausea, tremors, seizures

Stimulants: Mood changes, sleep and appetite disturbances

Effects:

Painkillers: Decrease motor skills and judgment, difficulty breathing, death

Depressants: Depressed heart rate, difficulty breathing, death

Stimulants: Irregular heart beat, high body temperature, hostility, paranoia, heart failure, fatal seizures

Every day in the United States, an average of 2,000 teenagers use prescription drugs without a doctor's guidance for the first time. Youth who abuse prescription medications are also more likely to report use of other drugs.

Prescription opioid pain medications such as Oxycontin and Vicodin have effects similar to heroin when taken in doses or in ways other than prescribed, and research now suggests that abuse of these drugs may open the door to heroin abuse because heroin is cheaper and easier to obtain than prescription opioids.

U.S. information

More teens abuse prescription drugs than any illicit drug except marijuana. In 2015, 16.8 percent of high school students in the United States report taking prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription during their lifetime, compared to 17.8 percent in 2013.

(U.S. Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015)

Sources: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Office of Applied Studies, NIDA Info Facts, Office of National Drug Control Policy