

Prescription Drug Abuse

Kids who learn about the risk of abusing prescription drugs from their parents are up to 50 percent less likely to use them.



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FACT BOX

- FACT** Among 18 to 25 year olds, about 6 percent reported using medicines non-medically, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).
- FACT** Painkillers, followed by depressants and stimulants, are the most common Rx drugs abused by teens, according to PDFA.
- FACT** Recent reports show a 400 percent increase in hospital treatment admissions for prescription pain relievers.

Summary

America's biopharmaceutical research companies recognize that prescription (Rx) drug abuse is a problem and that all stakeholders – health care providers, pharmacists, patients, industry, government, law enforcement and the community as a whole – must work together to prevent this kind of abuse.

To help ensure appropriate use of medicines while at the same time reduce abuse of prescription drugs, there must be substantial education, training and responsibility among many groups involved in health care delivery.

Biopharmaceutical companies, in particular, are committed to the safe and effective treatment of patients who take our medicines and to preventing Rx abuse by individuals of all ages by educating the public through partnerships with DARE, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA), the Washington Health Foundation (WHF) and others.



Did you know?

Prescription drugs are the most commonly abused substances by the youngest teens (12 to 13 years old) and annual new users of prescription drugs now outnumber new users of marijuana, according to NSDUH.



Overview of Prescription Drug Abuse

When medications are used properly, they can extend and enhance patients' lives. But when medicines are misused and abused, they can lead to dangerous consequences.

To help tackle this serious issue, biopharmaceutical companies are not only taking steps to ensure that patients of all ages fully understand the importance of taking their medications exactly as prescribed, they are also supporting public health initiatives – and have been working with other public and private stakeholders – that are aimed at educating the public about this type of abuse.

For example, we helped create a curriculum with DARE America to help teach grade school students (with a specific focus on 5th to 12th grades) across the country about

the dangers of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse. We also helped launch a program with the Washington Health Foundation that educates college students, who are a high-risk group, about the dangers of Rx abuse. Our goal is to help ensure that patients use medicines exactly as prescribed and as their doctors intend.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America and Consumer Healthcare Products Association, we developed a 16-page newspaper supplement distributed nationwide to educate young people and parents about abuse of over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

We also support the SMARxT Disposal initiative, which raises awareness of proper disposal

methods of unused or expired medicines to help prevent diversion and abuse of prescription medicines.

While overuse of prescription drugs is a concern, there must also be an appropriate balance between preventing Rx abuse with ensuring continued patient access to needed medicines, including pain medicines.

Finally, when patients don't take their medicines as prescribed, it can lead to devastating results such as hospital and emergency room visits, poor health outcomes and ultimately higher health care costs to the U.S. health care system.

For more information, go to www.phrma.org.

