



How Do Kids Get Prescription Drugs?

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It's more important than ever to guard your child from the dangers of smoking: Cigarettes may be more addictive than they used to be. The amount of nicotine that smokers inhale per cigarette rose by 11 percent from 1998 to 2005.

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Special Feature

[Teens Using Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs to Get High](#)

When popping pills becomes a top priority, people often find new ways to get the drugs they want. Most Americans get their prescriptions filled at local or legitimate online pharmacies, but people who misuse and abuse prescription drugs look for other sources.

How do people get prescription drugs illegally?

Online
Hundreds of online sources sell prescription drugs. Some are legitimate, but others fail to follow the law. For example, some Web sites sell medicine without a doctor's prescription. Almost anyone with a computer and a credit card can get a prescription filled online even if they never see a doctor. Just by surfing the Web, teens easily can discover online drug sellers and order medicines they've heard about.

Theft
People who are looking for prescription drugs may steal the drugs when visiting the homes of family members and friends. They also may raid the medicine cabinet at home, taking prescriptions that belong to other family members.

Purchasing
Teens may buy another youth's prescription medicine. For example, if a student is taking Ritalin®, he may find that his classmates are willing to pay money for his pills.

What to do?

- Learn about the abuse of prescription drugs.
- Look for opportunities to talk with your child about prescription drug abuse and other substance abuse issues. Medication is advertised widely in our society. When you see ads and television shows that suggest there's a pill for every ill, discuss them with your child.
- Store prescription medications in your home in a safe place where your kids or their friends can't find them. Throw out unused and old medication.
- Be aware of your child's online activities. Keep your computer in a room where you can monitor your child as she surfs the Web. Check the history of sites your kids visit on the Internet.
- Monitor credit cards and online accounts for purchases from online pharmacies. If you don't recognize an item on your credit card statement, question it. If your child has his own credit card, review the purchases.
- Check the mail. Make sure that you know exactly what letters and packages are being delivered to your home, especially ones that are sent to your child. Question any unmarked items.

Use of prescription drugs has grown considerably in recent years and so has the misuse and abuse of medications that were designed to help people. Prescription drugs are powerful and should be taken only as directed by a doctor. Monitor your child's activities to make sure that she's not getting medicines that will harm her.

Resources:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. March 3, 2005. [Prescription Drugs: Killing More Than Pain](#), last referenced 3/7/2005.

National Institute for Drug Abuse. [Prescription Medications](#), last referenced 2/23/2005.

Consumer Reports. February 2001. [Prescription for Trouble](#), last referenced 3/7/2005.

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. [About Prescription & Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse](#), last referenced 2/23/2005.

Activities

E-Cards

Videos

Links

Drug Facts

Getting Treatment

Mental Health Dictionary