

# Helping Your Teen Avoid Prescription Drugs

## Consequences of Drug Use

- Drug dependence
- Poor judgement
- Risky sexual activity
- Impaired driving
- Mental health disorders

## Risk Factors

- Family history of substance abuse
- Behavioral/mental health condition
- History of trauma
- Low self-esteem

## Talk to Your Teen

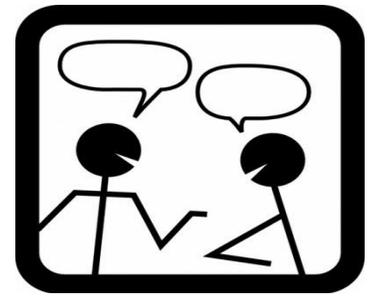
Being able to talk to your teen about drugs is an important step in the process. Discuss reasons not to use drugs with them as well as strategies to resist peer pressure. Know your teens activities and pay attention to their whereabouts. It is important to set rules and consequences for your teen and to set a good example. Providing support for your teen is essential.

## Red Flags and Warning Signs

- Extreme change in friends, eating habits, sleep patterns, appearance
- Withdrawing from the family
- Irresponsible behavior
- Medicine containers in teens room



# What To Say



## HIGH SCHOOL

Scenario: Your teen is starting high school — and you want to remind him that he doesn't have to give in to peer pressure to drink or use drugs.

What to Say: You must be so excited about starting high school. It's going to be a ton of fun, and we want you to have a great time. But we also know there's going to be some pressure to start drinking, abusing medicine, smoking pot or taking other drugs. A lot of people feel like this is just what high-school kids do. But, it's not what you have to do. Not all high school kids drink or use drugs! Many don't, which means it won't make you weird to choose not to drink or use drugs, either.

You can still have a lot of fun if you don't drink or use drugs. It is important to seek out these other kids who are making good choices and be brave about trying new activities or making new friends. You'll have a lot of decisions to make about what you want to do in high school, and you might even make some mistakes. Just know that you can talk to us about anything, anytime — even if you DO make a mistake or feel stuck in a situation that you need help to get out of. We won't freak out. We'll figure out a way to help you. We want you to count on us to help you make smart decisions and stay safe, okay?

## Painkillers After Sports Injury

The Situation: A few weeks ago, your son suffered a painful sports injury. The doctor prescribed painkillers to ease his agony, but you notice your son's supply of prescription medicine dwindling way too quickly. When you ask him why he has so little medicine left, he says that he's been taking more than prescribed because the pain is unbearable.

What to Say: Be sure to listen and understand the extent of your son's pain before diving into the issue of prescription medicine abuse. It is often the case that the abuse of painkillers by athletes starts off innocently — they genuinely do try to tame the pain. Emphasize the point that prescription painkillers can be dangerous due their highly addictive nature and that he needs to closely follow the doctor's specific instructions about his dosage.

You should then tell him that taking more than prescribed is dangerous because not only can he become addicted, but he can face short-term effects like vomiting and respiratory depression or long-term effects like building up a

tolerance where the medicine doesn't help anymore — which can lead many abusers to overdose. Tell him that you will schedule another appointment with his doctor to be sure his pain is addressed right away.

Also, be aware that there is also a chance that your son might be sharing his medicine with his friends.

That's why it is important to manage the supply of these types of medications and be aware of the risk of abuse by your teen or others. Be sure to monitor and safeguard your son's prescription medicine and get him the help he needs.

## **When Friends Change**

The Situation: You notice your son is home more often than usual and you inquire whether everything is okay with friends at school. He tells you that some of his friends have started taking their parents' prescription medicine and that he did not want to take any, so his friends have become distant. You can tell how upset he is and you're worried that his loneliness and peer pressure may cause him to cave in.

What to Say: First, let your son know how proud you are of his decision not to accept the prescription medicine. Shower him with praise! Then discuss the problems he is having with his friends and why he feels isolated.

While you don't want to dismiss his friends as no-good misfits, let him know that sometimes people change and make poor decisions, but that doesn't mean you have to follow down their path. Emphasize that if someone is truly your friend, he or she will not pressure you into taking drugs or condemn you for not taking drugs. Real friends respect your decisions. However, as a parent you still may not want your son immersed in a crowd of kids who abuse drugs — including prescription medicine

## **Illegal vs. Legal Drugs**

The Situation: You hear rumors from another mom that there was drug use at a recent high-school party your son attended. When you confront your son, he tells you that other kids were taking "hardcore" drugs like cocaine and heroin and he "only" took someone else's prescription medicine. He doesn't believe that prescription medicine and illegal street drugs have the same level of danger.

What to Say: Begin the conversation by letting your son know that you appreciate his honesty and you're glad that he feels he can talk to you. Be sure your son understands that simply because prescription medicine is legal it does

not mean it is always safe — and that prescription medicine is only legal for the person for whom it's prescribed. Abuse of prescription and over-the-counter cough medicines can be just as addictive and dangerous (even fatal) as the abuse of illegal street drugs. In fact, some of those “hardcore,” illegal street drugs are made of the same stuff as prescription medicine. For instance, heroin and oxycodone are both opioids derived from a common root: poppy. While kids might think that taking a prescription painkiller gives the full-on euphoria of heroin without the risks, the truth is if misused or abused, prescription painkillers are very dangerous. Also, if you take someone else's prescription you may not know what the pill really is or what the strength is. A large, single dose of oxycodone can result in potentially fatal respiratory depression.

# Drug Guide for Parents

	Cough Medicine/DMX	Prescription Pain Relievers	Prescription Sedatives and/or Tranquilizers	Prescription Stimulants
<b>Street Names</b>	Dex, Red Devils, Robo, Triple C, Tussin, Skittles, Syrup	Codeine, OxyContin, Percocet, Percs, Vicodin, Vike, Vitamin V	Mebaral, Quaaludes, Xanax, Valium	Adderall, Dexedrine, Ritalin, Vyvanse
<b>Looks Like</b>	Liquid, pills powder, gel caps	Tablets and capsules	Multi-colored tablets and capsules; some can be in liquid form	Tablets and capsules
<b>How It's Used/Abused</b>	Swallowed	Swallowed or injected	Swallowed or injected	Swallowed, injected or snorted
<b>What Teens Have Heard</b>	Causes a trippy high with various plateaus	A free high, straight from the medicine cabinet	A great release of tension	Keeps you attentive and focused
<b>Dangerous Because</b>	Can cause abdominal pain, extreme nausea, liver damage	A large single dose can cause severe respiratory depression that can lead to death	Slows down the brains activity and when a user stops taking them, there can be a rebound effect, possibly leading to seizures and other harmful consequences	Taking high doses may result in dangerously high body temperatures and an irregular heartbeat. Potential for heart attacks or lethal seizures
<b>Teen Usage (Grades 9-12)</b>	1 in 7 teens have abused cough medicine in their lifetime	1 in 7 teens has abused prescription pain relievers in their lifetime	1 in 13 12 <sup>th</sup> graders has abused sedative and or tranquilizers in their lifetime	1 in 8 teens has abused Ritalin or Adderall in their lifetime
<b>Signs of Abuse</b>	Slurred speech, loss of coordination, disorientation, vomiting	Medicine bottles present without illness, Rx bottles missing, disrupted eating and sleeping patterns	Slurred speech, shallow breathing, sluggishness, disorientation, lack of coordination	Lack of appetite, increased alertness, attention span and energy

# Prevention: How to properly dispose of your prescription medicines

## Dropbox locations in La Crosse, Wisconsin:

- La Crosse County Sheriff's Department:  
Room 1500, M-F 8am-4:30pm
- La Crosse Police Department:  
Lobby, M-F 8:30am-5:00pm
- Onalaska Police Department:  
Lobby, M-F 8am-5pm
- West Salem Police Department:  
Lobby, M-F 8am-4:30pm
- Holmen Police Department:  
Lobby, M-F 8am-4:30pm
- Campbell Police Department:  
Lobby, M-F 8am-4:30pm
- University of WI- La Crosse Student Health Center: Waiting room, check website for the clinic's hours of operation [here](#).
- Walgreens Pharmacy West Avenue location only, 24hrs/7 days a week

### When Should I Put my Medications in a Drop Box?

- You have stopped taking the medication
- Your dose has changed
- It is expired
- You no longer need the medication

## The boxes are located in the following areas on Gundersen campuses during normal Pharmacy business hours:

- Gundersen La Crosse Clinic Pharmacy
- Gundersen East Building Pharmacy
- Gundersen Onalaska Clinic Pharmacy retail area
- Cass St. Pharmacy
- Degen Berglund Holmen Pharmacy
- Degen Berglund La Crosse Pharmacy
- Degen Berglund Onalaska Pharmacy
- Prarie Du Chien Clinic Pharmacy

## Sharps Containers are located in the following locations:

- North La Crosse: At boat ramp behind Hardee's at 1311 Rose Street
- South La Crosse: King Street alley between Fourth Street and Fifth Avenue

## Items NOT for Disposal in the Drop Boxes:

- **No** Needles/syringes
- **No** Inhalers
- **No** personal care products such as shampoo, soaps, vitamins, sunscreen, etc.
- **No** illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia
- **No** infectious waste
- **No** thermometers
- **No** IV bags
- **No** household cosmetics and chemicals
- **No** batteries