

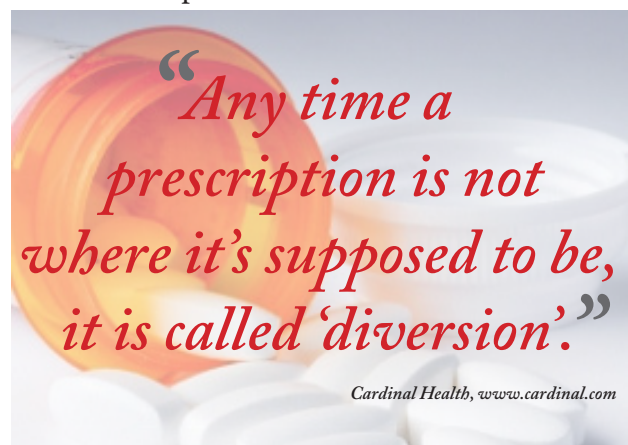
The Prescription Drug Epidemic: How You Can Help

Think about your home. What prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs do you have? Where are they kept? Would you know if some were missing? The good news is that you can take steps immediately to limit access to these drugs and help avoid contributing to the diversion of prescription drugs:

- **Safeguard all drugs at home.** Monitor quantities and control access. Take note of how many pills are in a bottle or pill packet, and keep track of refills. This goes for all members of your household. If you find you or a family member needs to refill medication more often than expected, there could be a real problem—someone may be taking your medication without your knowledge.
- **Set clear rules in your household about all drug use,** including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider's advice and dosages. Make sure all family members use prescription drugs only as directed by a medical provider and follow instructions for OTC products carefully. This includes taking the proper dosage and not using with other substances without a medical provider's approval. You should never take prescription or OTC drugs with street drugs or alcohol. If you have any questions about how to take a drug, call your family physician or pharmacist.
- **Be a good role model** for children and teens by following these same rules with your own medicines. Examine your own behavior to ensure you set a good example. If you misuse your prescription drugs, such as share them with your kids, or abuse them, your teen will take notice. Avoid sharing your drugs and always follow your medical provider's instructions.

“*More than 70% of people 12 and older who abuse prescription drugs say they get them from a friend or relative.*”

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings, NSDUH Series H-44, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 12-4713. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012.



- **Properly conceal and dispose of old or unused medicines in the trash.** Unused prescription drugs should be hidden and thrown away in the trash. You can mix them with an undesirable substance (like used coffee grounds or kitty litter) and put the mixture in an empty can or bag. Unless the directions say otherwise, do NOT flush medications down the drain or toilet because the chemicals can pollute the water supply. Also, remove any personal, identifiable information from prescription bottles or pill packages before you throw them away. Or take medications to a drug disposal site, or drug take-back day, for information about this in Ashland County call the Sheriff Department at 419-289-3911.

- **Ask friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs as well.** Make sure your friends and relatives, especially grandparents, know about the risks, too, and encourage them to regularly monitor their own medicine cabinets. If there are other households your teen has access to, talk to those families as well about the importance of safeguarding medications. If you don't know the parents of your child's friends, then make an effort to get to know them, and get on the same page about rules and expectations for use of all drugs, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Follow up with your teen's school administration to find out what they are doing to address issues of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse in schools.

Help educate others about the dangers of abusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs. These are powerful drugs that, when abused, can be just as dangerous as street drugs. The risks of misusing prescription drugs far outweigh any “benefits.”

“*The abuse and misuse of prescription drugs [are] second only to marijuana use as the nation's most prevalent drug problem.*”

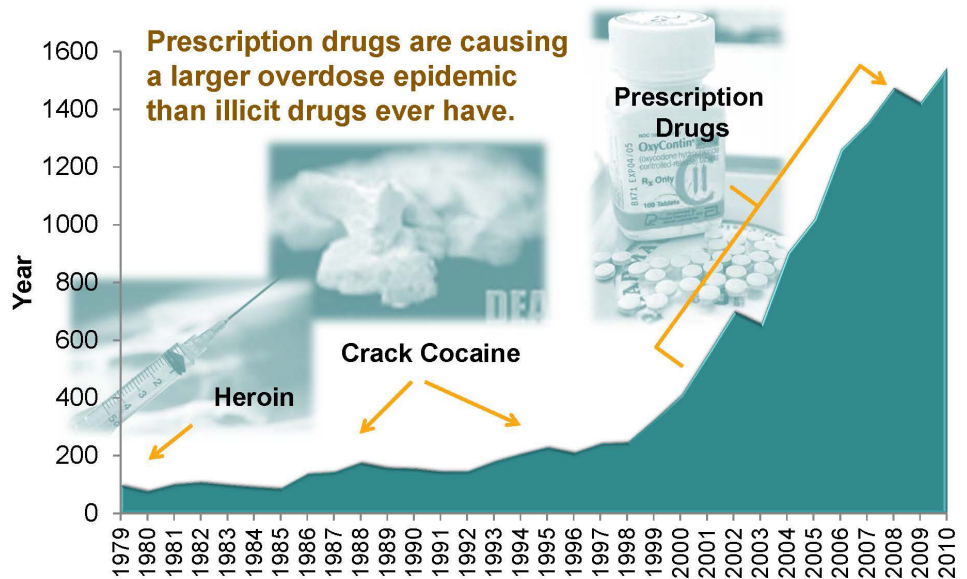
- Dr. Ken Hale, R.Ph., Ph.D., Assistant Dean for Professional and External Affairs at
The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy

Prescription Drug Misuse: What's the Big Deal?

“Prescription drug abuse is the intentional use of a medication without a prescription; in a way other than as prescribed; or for the experience or feeling it causes. It is not a new problem, but one that deserves renewed attention. For although prescription drugs can be powerful allies, they also pose serious health risks related to their abuse.”

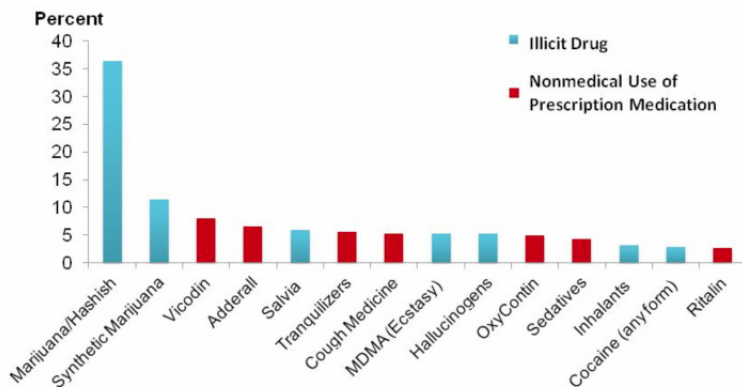
- National Institute on Drug Abuse

EPIDEMICS OF UNINTENTIONAL DRUG OVERDOSES IN OHIO, 1979-2010^{1,2,3}



Source: ¹WONDER (NCHS Compressed Mortality File, 1979-1998 & 1999-2005) ²2006-2008 ODH Office of Vital Statistics, ³Change from ICD-9 to ICD-10 coding in 1999 (caution in comparing before and after 1998 and 1999)

After Cannabis, Nonmedical use of Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications Account for Most of the Commonly Abused Drugs in 12th Graders (*in the past year*)



Categories are not mutually exclusive
SOURCE: University of Michigan, 2011 Monitoring the Future Study

Young adults (age 18 to 25) are the biggest abusers of prescription (Rx) opioid pain relievers, ADHD stimulants, and anti-anxiety drugs¹. They do it for all kinds of reasons, including to get high, or because they think Rx stimulants will help them study better^{2,3,4}. But Rx abuse is dangerous: In 2010, almost 3,000 young adults died from prescription drug (mainly opioid) overdoses⁵—more than died from overdoses of any other drug, including heroin and cocaine combined— and many more needed emergency treatment.

¹SAMHSA, NSDUH; ²Rabiner et al 2009; ³McCabe et al 2007; ⁴Lord et al 2011; ⁵CDC Wonder;

For more information call the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Ashland County at: 419-281-3139.



Visit these websites for additional information on prescription drug abuse:

www.rxsafetymatters.org
<https://www.drugfreeactionalliance.org/prescription-drug-abuse>
www.themedicineabuseproject.org
www.drugfree.org

If you or someone you know is struggling with prescription drug or other substance abuse issues call Ashland County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ACCADA) at 419-289-7675. **REMEMBER:** It is OK to ask for help!

Protect Your Family: Get the Most from Your Medicines

- **Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare professionals** to understand why a certain medicine is recommended, what side effects to watch for and any possible interactions with what you are currently using.
- **Know what you and your family members are taking** - know the ingredients; when, how and how long to use medicines; as well as what they are supposed to do and when to expect results, and when to contact your doctor or pharmacist if you experience a problem.
- **Read and re-read the label**, follow the instructions and always double check you have the right medicine for the right person.
- **Avoid interactions by knowing which other medicines**, dietary supplements, foods and/or beverages might cause problems if used with your prescription medicine.
- **Pay attention to the medicine's effects.** Ask your children or partner how certain medicines are making them feel.

The Center for Improving Medication Management & the National Council on Patient Information and Education, 2013. www.learnaboutrxsafety.org