



# When teens want to get high IS YOUR PRESCRIPTION AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP?

It can be medication left over from your last surgery. Maybe they're the pills you keep on the dresser or tucked inside your purse. Teens are finding prescription drugs wherever people they know keep them — and abusing them to get high. In fact, 70 percent of persons age 12 and older who abuse prescription painkillers say they get them from a relative or friend<sup>1</sup> — leading to several troubling trends:

- **Every day, more than 2,000 kids age 12 to 17 try a painkiller nonmedically for the first time.**<sup>2</sup>
- **Teens abuse prescription drugs more than any illicit street drug except marijuana.**<sup>3</sup>
- **Drug treatment admissions for prescription painkillers increased more than 300 percent from 1996 to 2006.**<sup>4</sup>

What's also disturbing is they don't realize these drugs can be just as dangerous as street drugs. So kids who would never try street drugs might feel safe abusing prescription drugs. Misperceptions about prescription drug abuse have serious consequences. Now that you know prescription drug abuse is a problem, here are ways parents can keep it from affecting their kids' lives:

- **Safeguard** all drugs at home. Monitor quantities and control access.
- **Set clear rules** for teens about all drug use, including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider's advice and dosages.
- **Be a good role model** by following the same rules with your own medicines.
- **Properly dispose** of old or unneeded medicines.
- **Ask friends and family** to safeguard their prescription drugs as well.

Following these steps is a start. Let your teen know where you stand.

1. 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, SAMHSA, 2008.  
2. Ibid. 3. Ibid. 4. 2006 Treatment Episode Data Set, SAMHSA, 2008.

