

T. Medication Management

Basic

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| Knows how to open a childproof container | www.youtube.com H-1 |
| Knows not to take someone else's medication | http://www.everydayhealth.com/columns/zimney-health-and-medical-news-you-can-use/16-reasons-not-to-use-someone-elses-prescription-medicine/ H-2 through 3 |
| Knows the names of the medications they are taking (or has a list of them to refer to) | Demonstration/observation of skill |
| Knows the difference between prescription and OTC medications | http://www.wisegeekhealth.com/what-is-the-difference-between-over-the-counter-and-prescription-medicines.htm#didyouknowout http://recomparision.com/comparisons/100874/over-the-counter-drugs-vs-prescription-drugs/ http://fda.org/index.php?article=prescription-drugs-versus-over-the-counter-drugs |
| Knows the diagnoses/reasons for which they are taking medications/supplements | Individualized instruction |
| Knows if they are allergic or have adverse reactions to medications/supplements and which ones | Individualized instruction |
| Knows what their medications look like (appearance such as size, shape, color, etc.) | http://www.drugs.com/pill_identification.html http://www.drugs.com/imprints.php http://www.webmd.com/pill-identification/default.htm |

Childproof Containers Activity- Instructors Guide

Preparation: Collect a few common types of childproof containers (specifically prescription pill containers). Make sure they are emptied and clean. Place them in a zip lock bag to keep with Health & Wellness curriculum/materials.

Demonstration: show group how to open each type of container.

Practice: allow group to practice opening the various containers, and provide cues as needed.

The Dangers of Taking Someone Else's Medication

Angie overheard her parents talking about how her brother's ADHD medicine was making him less hungry. Because Angie was worried about her weight, she started sneaking one of her brother's pills every few days.

Todd found an old bottle of painkillers that had been left over from his dad's operation. He decided to try them. Because a doctor had prescribed the pills, Todd figured that meant they'd be OK to try.

Both Todd and Angie are taking risks. Prescription painkillers and other medications help lots of people live more productive lives, freeing them from the symptoms of medical conditions like depression or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). But that's only when they're prescribed for a particular individual to treat a specific condition.

Taking prescription drugs in a way that hasn't been recommended by a doctor can be more dangerous than people think. In fact, it's drug abuse. And it's just as illegal as taking street drugs.

Why Do Some People Abuse Prescription Drugs?

Some people experiment with prescription drugs because they think they will help them have more fun, lose weight, fit in, and even study more effectively. Prescription drugs can be easier to get than street drugs: Family members or friends may have them. But prescription drugs are also sometimes sold on the street like other illegal drugs.

A 2009 survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that prescription drug abuse is on the rise, with 20% of teens saying they have taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription.

Why? Some people think that prescription drugs are safer and less addictive than street drugs. After all, these are drugs that moms, dads, and even kid brothers and sisters use. To Angie, taking her brother's ADHD medicine felt like a good way to keep her appetite in check. She'd heard how bad diet pills can be, and she wrongly thought that the ADHD drugs would be safer.

But prescription drugs are only safe for the individuals who actually have prescriptions for them. That's because a doctor has examined these people and prescribed the right dose of medication for a specific medical condition. The doctor has also told them exactly how they should take the medicine, including things to avoid while taking the drug — such as drinking alcohol, smoking, or taking other medications. They also are aware of potentially dangerous side effects and can monitor patients closely for these.

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Other people who try prescription drugs are like Todd. They think they're not doing anything illegal because these drugs are prescribed by doctors. But taking drugs without a prescription — or sharing a prescription drug with friends — is actually breaking the law.

What Are the Dangers of Abusing Medications?

Whether they're using street drugs or medications, drug abusers often have trouble at school, at home, with friends, or with the law. The likelihood that someone will commit a crime, be a victim of a crime, or have an accident is higher when that person is abusing drugs — no matter whether those drugs are medications or street drugs.

Like all drug abuse, using prescription drugs for the wrong reasons has serious risks for a person's health. Opioid abuse can lead to vomiting, mood changes, decrease in ability to think (cognitive function), and even decreased respiratory function, coma, or death. This risk is higher when prescription drugs like opioids are taken with other substances like alcohol, antihistamines, and CNS depressants.

CNS depressants have risks, too. Abruptly stopping or reducing them too quickly can lead to seizures. Taking CNS depressants with other medications, such as prescription painkillers, some over-the-counter cold and allergy medications, or alcohol can slow a person's heartbeat and breathing — and even kill.

Abusing stimulants (like some ADHD drugs) may cause heart failure or seizures. These risks are increased when stimulants are mixed with other medicines — even OTC ones like certain cold medicines. Taking too much of a stimulant can lead a person to develop a dangerously high body temperature or an irregular heartbeat. Taking several high doses over a short period of time may make a drug abuser aggressive or paranoid. Although stimulant abuse might not lead to physical dependence and withdrawal, the feelings these drugs give people can cause them to use the drugs more and more often so they become a habit that's hard to break.

The dangers of prescription drug abuse can be made even worse if people take drugs in a way they weren't intended to be used. Ritalin may seem harmless because it's prescribed even for little kids with ADHD. But when a person takes it either unnecessarily or in a way it wasn't intended to be used such as snorting or injection, Ritalin toxicity can be serious. And because there can be many variations of the same medication, the dose of medication and how long it stays in the body can vary. The person who doesn't have a prescription might not really know which one he or she has.

Probably the most common result of prescription drug abuse is addiction. People who abuse medications can become addicted just as easily as if they were taking street drugs. The reason many drugs have to be prescribed by a doctor is because some of them are quite addictive. That's one of the reasons most doctors won't usually renew a prescription unless they see the patient — they want to examine the patient to make sure he or she isn't getting addicted.