

HOW ABUSE STARTS

what you need to know about prescription drug addiction

The opioid abuse epidemic is at an all-time high in New Jersey. Opioids are a variety of pain medication such as morphine, oxycodone and codeine. They are often prescribed in result of an injury and are perceived as harmless. Because of this, they are also easy to access and pass along to a friend. However, the effects of these medications are very powerful and often change the way the body and brain process. This can lead to abuse and addiction. The addiction to legal opioids can lead to use of heroin, a cheap and illegal opioid. It is important to secure your child at the first step of use during this epidemic.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most high school students start abuse from medications obtained from friends or family. 73% of teens feel it is easy to obtain medications from family

- "street drugs" and prescription drugs have the same addictive property. However, if Rx drugs are taken as directed, abuse and addiction may be avoided.
- Drugs do not discriminate! They affect people from all races, ethnicities and socioeconomic classes.
- Prescription drug overdose related deaths outnumber that of heroin.



After marijuana and alcohol, **prescription drugs** are the **most commonly abused substances** by Americans age **14 and older.**



COMMON SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE

- a change in peer group or dropping longtime friends
- carelessness with grooming or change in appearance
- negative decline in academic performance
- missing classes or skipping school
- loss of interest in usual activities
- trouble in school or with the law
- changes in eating or sleeping habits
- deteriorating relationships with family members and friends



WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

HAVE AN OPEN DISCUSSION

- 1** Keep an open mind by engaging in one-on-one about the use of opioid in your child's school. You may not always get the response you would like but be patient and have a continuing conversation. Teens who have a better communication and bond with family are less likely to abuse drugs.
- 2** Provide your children with escape routes. Discuss with them what is the best approach for them to say no and refuse the situation.
- 3** Monitor your children for any changes in behavior. Growing up is a critical time and they will go through natural changes socially. However, if there are any extraordinary changes, it is important to note them.

MANAGE YOUR CHILDREN'S MEDICATION

- Prevention is key in opioid abuse. Make sure to check your medication cabinet for outdated and unfinished medication to properly dispose.
- Alert nurses and coaches if your child is on prescription painkillers

NEXT STEPS: WHERE TO GET HELP

SAMHSA's National Helpline

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

CALL

Free and confidential information in English and Spanish for individuals and family members facing substance abuse and mental health issues. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

Narc-Anon of NJ: fellowship of those who are affected by the disease of addiction in a relative or friend.