

Drug Free Adams County

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Drug Free

Adams County
Rays of Hope for a Better Tomorrow

Medicine Misuse Dangers

Did you know that 20% of teens say they have taken a prescription drug without having a prescription for it themselves, and close to 4% report misusing over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicine to get high? When prescription drugs are misused, they can be just as dangerous as illegal drugs. More than half of the drug overdose deaths in the United States each year are caused by prescription drug misuse.

Dangers of Prescription Drug Misuse

Prescription drugs can be misused in a variety of ways, such as:

- Taking someone else's prescription medication.
- Taking a prescription medication in a way other than prescribed.
- Taking prescription medication to get "high."
- Mixing prescription drugs with alcohol or certain other drugs.



Prescription drugs that affect the brain can cause physical dependence that could lead to addiction. Also, keep in mind that prescription drugs are carefully prescribed by a medical provider, factoring in a patient's size, condition, and medical history. Using medication in ways not intended, or by people they are not prescribed for, can be extremely dangerous and in some cases even fatal.

Dangers of OTC Drug Misuse

Misusing over-the-counter drugs that contain DXM (an ingredient in cold and cough medicines) can also produce very dangerous effects. Misusing prescription cough medicine can lead to nausea and dizziness, and in some cases, seizures and overdose.

Help Prevent Teen Medicine Abuse

Here are two simple steps you can take.

1. **TALK** to your teen about medicine abuse. Teens who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are 50% less likely to use drugs.
2. **MONITOR** your medicine cabinets and your teen's activities.

Together, we can help make strides against this growing public health concern.