

Prescription Drug Abuse



Fact Sheet

What parents should know...

1. Prescription drug abuse is an increasing national problem affecting people of all ages and backgrounds.
2. In 2012, more than 1 in 10 Fairfax County students reported using a painkiller (ex: vicodin, oxycotin) without a prescription.
3. Over 70% of those who abuse prescription drugs obtain them free from a friend or relative, typically without their knowledge.
4. Many people, especially teens think that taking prescription drugs is safe, but misusing or abusing prescription drugs can lead to dependency, addiction, a trip to the emergency room or in some cases death.
5. Students are abusing prescription drugs prescribed for ADD and ADHD to cram for exams or to de-stress from school work.
6. Teens may abuse amphetamines to lose weight or steroids to bulk up.
7. Be aware of “pharming” – when teens collect pills and take them randomly at parties often combined with alcohol.
8. Students may give their prescription drugs to their friends and some may even sell them.

Things you can do as a parent:

- ✓ Monitor medication usage by family members
- ✓ Secure your prescriptions the same way you would secure other valuables in your home
- ✓ Never share your medications with anyone
- ✓ Dispose of medications properly
- ✓ Above all, be a good role model and talk with your children about the risks of accidental prescription overdose and abuse

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How to Dispose of Medicines

- 1. Participate in a community take-back event.**
Check our website for scheduled events.
- 2. Contact your local pharmacy to purchase a postage paid medication disposal envelope.**
Disposal envelopes allow you to place, seal, and mail medications you no longer use for safe, eco-friendly disposal.
- 3. Safely dispose of expired and unwanted medications at home year-round:**
 - ✓ Remove personal information from medication container
 - ✓ Dilute medication in a sealed container or sealable bag with kitty litter or used coffee grounds
 - ✓ Throw away the sealed container or sealable bag in the trashcan
 - ✓ Do not flush medications down the toilet
- 4. Proper disposal of expired and unwanted prescription drugs can**
 - Prevent accidental poisoning and overdosing
 - Prevent potential drug abuse
 - Protect the environment by keeping medicine out of our waterways

Needles should be recapped and placed in a heavy-duty detergent bottle. The detergent bottle should be labeled "Caution! Syringes-Needles. DO NOT RECYCLE!" Screw-on top should be fastened prior to throwing the container in the trashcan.

For more information on prescription drug abuse and how to dispose of prescription drugs please visit:

www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/dontflush/>
[http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/trash/dispsharps
.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/trash/dispsharps.htm)
<http://fairfaxcounty.gov/police/>