



Topic: Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drug Abuse

What We Need to Know

Emergency rooms across the country are admitting more and more youth who are overdosing on non-prescription cough and cold medicines. 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. Abuse of non-prescription (over-the-counter) and prescription drugs now poses a dangerous threat to our youth. One of the most abused substances – dextromethorphan or DMX – is found in over 100 over-the-counter medicines.

Conversation Starters

Why do you think friends are willing to share prescription drugs? Why do you think kids experiment with over-the-counter drugs? Do you understand the risks?

Some experts say “this is the age of medication.” What do you think that means? Do you agree?

What would you do if you noticed friends sharing prescription drugs? Would you speak up? Why or why not?

Resources

[Kids Health](#)

[Stop Medicine Abuse.org](#)

[Time to Talk.org](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)