

Need Help? Get Help!

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America

www.drugfree.org

Comprehensive information, resources and tips from experts and other parents; opportunities to connect and share experiences with other families. For teens, the important first step with any health issue is to get a professional evaluation of your child's needs. Professional help, your doctor, hospital, or school nurse may be able to assist. Or you can call **1-800-662-HELP** or visit www.drugfree.org/intervention and click on "Find Treatment."

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration (SAMHSA)

www.samhsa.gov

Part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services(USDHHS): Provides information, statistics and articles on improving the quality and availability of drug and alcohol addiction treatment.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

www.drugabuse.gov

Part of the USDHHS and one of the National Institutes of Health: Primary source of scientific studies and new discoveries on the effects of drug abuse and how best to prevent drug abuse and treat drug addiction.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

www.nimh.nih.gov

Part of the USDHHS and once of the National Institutes of Health: Primary source of scientific research on mental and behavioral disorders.

Medicine Inventory:

- Do an inventory of the contents of your medicine cabinets, kitchen cabinets, bureau tops, or anywhere in the house where you may store medicines.
- If necessary, monitor the pill quantities and medicine levels in your prescription and OTC drug containers.

Medicine inventory continued...

Medicine Inventory (continued):

- Put drugs away. If you currently need these drugs, put them in a place where you can get to them easily but where your child or other persons is unlikely to look.
- If drugs in your house are left over from a previous condition or ailment, get rid of them by taking them to the local prescription drug/OTC drop boxes.
- Urge your friends—especially the parents of your children's friends—to perform medicine inventories of their own.

Polk County Resources

Non-Emergency

NC 2-1-1

To access our information and referral line, Dial 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162 or go to www.nc211.org

Polk County Health Department

828-894-8271 www.rpmhd.org

Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly

www.polkfitfreshandfriendly.org

Polk County Sheriff's Department

40 Ward Street, Columbus, NC

828-894-3001 www.polkncsheriff.com

Prescription Drug/OTC Medication Drop Box Location

Columbus Police Department

117 Walker Street, Columbus, NC

828-894-5464 www.columbusnc.com

Prescription Drug/OTC Medication Drop Box Location

Tryon Police Department

291 N. Trade Street, Tryon, NC

828-859-9195 www.tryon-nc.com

Saluda Police Department

2 East Main Street (PO Box 248), Saluda, NC

828-749-2691 www.cityofsaludanc.com

Source: The Partnership for a Drug-Free America

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POLK COUNTY



POLK SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

Prescription Drug and
Other-the-Counter* (OTC)
Medication Abuse

Know the Facts

This project made possible through funding from NCCI and in partnership with Polk Fit Fresh and Friendly, St. Luke's Hospital and RHA Prevention Resource Center.

Prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications are fast becoming the new “party” drugs for many adults and teens.

Frightening Stats for teens

A survey of teenagers by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America found that:

- 1 in 5 teens have tried Vicodin, a powerful and addictive narcotic pain reliever
- 1 in 10 have tried OxyContin, another prescription narcotic
- 1 in 10 have used the stimulants Ritalin or Adderall for nonmedical purposes
- 1 in 11 teens have admitted to getting high on cough medicine

Many parents, who may be aware of their children’s familiarity with illegal street drugs, do not have “pharming” —that is, their kids’ using prescription and OTC drugs for recreational use —on their radar screens, even though nearly one in five teens have used powerful narcotic pain relievers for nonmedical reasons. Nor are parents aware that their own medicine cabinets and home computers are potential sources of these drugs for teenage abuse.

Prescription and OTC drugs are important and beneficial products that every year improve and save countless lives. They are effective, and they are also safe—but only if used as medically intended.

We’re NOT talking about kids/adults mistakenly taking the wrong dose of legal medicines or taking a stronger-than-necessary medicine for an ailment. We’re talking about drug abuse—kids/adults using prescription and OTC drugs on purpose in order to get high.

If people get in the habit of using medicines that are not medically intended for him/her, or of taking higher-than-recommended doses just for fun, bad things can happen: **Dramatic increases in blood pressure and heart rate, organ damage, addiction, difficulty breathing, seizures, and possibly death.**

Educate yourself

If you’re going to discuss prescription and OTC drug abuse, you need to know what you’re talking about. You should be able to distinguish the types and effects of drugs some people use to get high.

A few examples of prescription medications that are abused and the dangers of abusing them are:

Pain Medication:

Vicodin * OxyContin * Percocet * Darvon * Codeine

Dangers: Highly addictive. Over time, tolerance develops to certain drugs, resulting in the need to take more and more to get the same pleasant feelings. Taken in overdose, breathing slows down and eventually stops, and death may occur. Taken in combination with other prescription or OTC drugs or alcohol, the risk of life-threatening respiratory depression is increased.

Stimulants:

Ritalin * Concerta * Adderall * Focalin * Dexedrine

Dangers: Can be addictive. High doses taken over a short time can lead to feelings of hostility, intense fear and paranoia. High doses may result in dangerously high body temperature and irregular heartbeat, with possible cardiovascular failure or seizures. Used in combination with OTC decongestants can result in dangerously high blood pressure or irregular heart rhythms. Can cause insomnia, digestive problems, and erratic weight change.

Sedatives, Sedative-Hypnotics, and Tranquilizers:

Valium * Xanax * Ativan * Klonopin * Restoril * Ambien * Lunesta * Mebaral * Nembutal

Dangers: Can be addictive; when use is reduced or stopped, seizures and other withdrawal symptoms may follow. Can be deadly in combination with prescription pain medications, some OTC cold and allergy drugs, or alcohol.

A few examples of OTC medications that are abused:

Cough Medicines:

Coricidin cough and cold tablets * Alka-Seltzer Plus cold and cough medicine * TheraFlu cough products * select Robitussin cough products * Tylenol cold and cough products * and any product that contains “Dextromethorphan” (DXM)

Dangers: DXM’s negative physical effects from overdose include rapid heartbeat, high blood pressure, diarrhea, seizures, panic, drowsiness, confusion, dizziness, blurred vision, impaired physical coordination, and coma. Side effects may be worse when DXM is used with other medications or with alcohol or illegal drugs. Overdoses of other ingredients found in DXM-containing medicines have their own serious side effects, including:

Acetaminophen (pain reliever)=liver damage

Chlorpheniramine (antihistamine)=increased heart rate, lack of coordination, seizures and coma

Guadifenesin (expectorant)=vomiting

Pseudophedrine (decongestant)=irregular heartbeat, headaches, difficulty breathing, anxiety, and seizures.

Warning Signs:

Clues that someone you know may be abusing prescription or OTC drugs to get high:

- Visits to pro-drug Internet sites devoted to “how to” get and abuse prescription and OTC drugs.
- Cough or cold, prescription, or unidentifiable medications among personal effects with no evidence of illness.
- Unexplained disappearance of medicines from medicines cabinet.
- Declining grades (teens), loss of interests in hobbies and usual activities.
- Changes in friends, physical appearance, hygiene, and general behavior.
- Disrupted eating or sleeping patterns.