What is it?
Misuse of prescription drugs means taking a medication in a manner or dose other than prescribed; taking someone else’s prescription, even if for a legitimate medical complaint such as pain, or taking a medication to get high.
Source: Misuse of Prescription Drugs, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Did You Know?
Prescription (RX) drugs are the most commonly misused substances by teens after marijuana and alcohol.
Source: https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/prescription-drugs

In 2016, 12 percent of high school seniors used a prescription drug non-medically in the past year.

Myth: It is safer to use prescription drugs to get high rather than using illegal drugs, because they are prescribed by a doctor or dentist and dispensed by a pharmacist.

Fact: Any use of prescription drugs without a doctor’s recommendation can be as dangerous as using illegal drugs. Improper use can have serious health effects, including addiction and overdose.

Commonly misused prescription drugs fall under 3 categories:
• Opioids—Painkillers like Vicodin® or codeine
• Depressants—Used to relieve anxiety or help someone sleep, like Valium® or Xanax®
• Stimulants—Used for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), like Adderall® or Ritalin®

What are the health effects?
• Misusing opioids can cause severe respiratory depression or death and can be addictive.
• Misusing depressants can cause sleepiness, impaired mental functioning, blurred vision, and can be addictive.
• Misusing stimulants can cause irregular heartbeat, paranoia, high fever, and can be addictive.

Did you know?
• Some teens use Adderall® and Ritalin® to boost their test performance to improve their grades. Studies show that these stimulants do not help learning when used by persons who do not have ADHD.
Source: www.drugabase.gov/publications/drugfacts/stimulant-adhd-medications-methylphenidate-amphetamines

• Misusing prescription opioid painkillers, like OxyContin® and Vicodin®, may lead to heroin use. Heroin is cheaper and easier to obtain and produces a similar high.

• Can you die from prescription drug misuse? YES!
The majority of drug overdose deaths (more than six out of ten) involve an opioid.
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose

Remember:
• Most teens who misuse prescription drugs get them free from a friend, relative, or the family medicine cabinet.
• Talk to your teen about the harmful effects of misusing prescription drugs not prescribed to them.
• Store prescribed medications in a locked cabinet.
• Dispose of medications properly to avoid harm to others.
Visit: https://go.usa.gov/xR7vT

For drug prevention information, visit DEA’s websites:
GetSmartAboutDrugs.com
For parents, caregivers, and educators
JustThinkTwice.com
For teens
CampusDrugPrevention.gov
For college students
dea.gov

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