

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS



PREVALENCE

- More than 9% of college students reported using one or more types of prescription drugs (including antidepressants, painkillers, sedatives, and stimulants) that were not prescribed to them within the last 12 months.
- College students have a higher likelihood of misusing prescription stimulants, such as Adderall and Ritalin, when compared to their non-college peers.
- Some students begin using prescription stimulants, often referred to as “study drugs,” in the belief it will benefit their academic performance, but the non-medical use of prescription stimulants has not been proven to improve academic performance.

Sources: Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2017: Volume 2; American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (Fall 2018)

CONSEQUENCES

- Depending on which prescription drug is misused, negative outcomes include:
 - Drowsiness, slowed breathing
 - Inability to concentrate
 - Psychosis, hallucinations, paranoia
 - Increased risk for cardiac effects
 - Loss of coordination
 - Addiction

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE

- Work with physicians and law enforcement personnel to inform students about the physical, academic, and legal risks and consequences of prescription drug misuse.
- Get educated:
 - Parents** – be able to talk knowledgeably about prescription drugs with your children.
 - Faculty members and staff** – be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of prescription drug misuse, and know the on- and off-campus resources to refer someone for help.
 - Students** – learn the facts and talk to your parents or another trusted adult (e.g., professor, coach, friend) about concerns you have about prescription drugs.
- Don't share your prescription drugs – they were prescribed to you, not someone else.
- Dispose of unused or expired medications properly. For more information, go to go.usa.gov/xmTnr.
- Get involved - join your campus's or local community's drug abuse prevention coalition.

RESOURCES

- **DEA Website:** campusdrugprevention.gov
- **DEA Publication:** Drug Fact Sheets campusdrugprevention.gov/content/drug-fact-sheets



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