

Upper Peninsula Communities That Care  
#UPCTC



# Prevent Youth Prescription Drug Misuse



Upper Peninsula Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Toolkit for Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers

Did You Know

Risk Factors/Warning Signs

Talking to Your Kids

What You Can Do/Prevention

Resources

## Did You Know?

- Over 2,000 teens begin abusing prescription drugs each day.
- 56% of teens say it's easy to get prescription drugs from their parent's medicine cabinet.
- Four in 10 teens who have misused or abused a prescription drug got it from their parent's medicine cabinet. The majority of teens get prescription drugs from family and friends.
- 27% of teens mistakenly believe that misusing and abusing prescription drugs is safer than using street drugs.
- Teens most commonly abuse pain relievers (i.e. OxyContin® and Vicodin®), stimulants (i.e. Ritalin® and Adderall®), and sedatives and tranquilizers (i.e. Valium® and Xanax®).



Did You Know

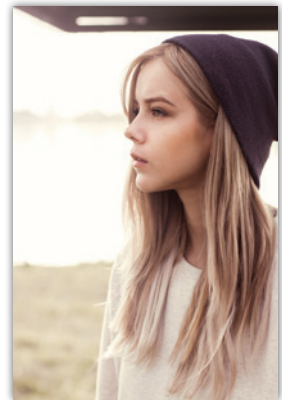
## Risk Factors

- Lack of parental supervision.
- Younger age (use commonly begins in teens and early 20s).
- Exposure to peer pressure or a social environment where there is drug use.
- Easy access to prescription drugs.
- Lack of knowledge about prescription drugs.
- Past or present addictions to other substances, including alcohol.

Many teens say their parents are not discussing the dangers of prescription drug abuse with them

## Warning Signs

- Missing medication from family members.
- Changes in appearance and behavior.
- Abrupt mood swings.
- Physical signs – constricted pupils, nausea, flushed skin.
- Excessive over-the-counter medicine use.
- Always looking for money.
- Trouble in school.
- Loss of interest in job, family, friends, exercise, hobbies, relationships, etc.
- Missing valuables.
- Unusual objects – straws, foil, burnt spoons.



## Talking to Your Kids

Conversations can be a powerful tool parents can use to connect with and protect kids. When tackling tough topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, figuring out what to say can be challenging. Here are some conversation starters:

**Scenario:** You find out that kids are selling prescription drugs at your child's school. Your child hasn't mentioned it.

**What to say:** I heard there are kids selling pills at school – prescription medicine that either they are taking or someone in their family takes. Have you heard about kids doing this?

**Scenario:** Your teen has started to hang out with kids you don't know and dropped his old friends.

**What to say:** It seems like you are hanging out with a different crowd. Is there something up with your usual friends or are

you just meeting some new kids?  
What are your new friends like?  
What do they like to do? What do you like about them?

**Scenario:** Your child tells you he was offered prescription medicine by a classmate – but said no.

**What to say:** Praise your child for making a good choice and telling you about it. Let him know that he can always blame you to get out of a bad situation. If you're ever offered drugs or someone else's medicine at school, tell that person, "My mother would kill me if I took that and then she wouldn't let me play baseball." You'll want to follow-up with the other parent and/or school.



Visit [http://medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/parent\\_talk\\_kit.pdf](http://medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/parent_talk_kit.pdf) for more conversation starters for any age.

# Safeguard Your Home

## Secure Medications in a Safe Place:

- Keep all medications in a safe place such as a locked cabinet or lock-box in a visible area of the house.
- Educate friends, family and others to secure medications.

## Monitor Medications:

- Track how many pills are in each prescription bottle or pack.
- Track refills for all medications in the household; including your teen's medications.
- Educate friends and family, especially grandparents, about regularly monitoring their medications.

About half of parents say anyone can access their medicine cabinet.

## Dispose of Old or Unused Medication Properly:

- Do not dispose of medication in the garbage, or in a sink or toilet.
- Visit a local prescription drug disposal site

[www.UPCNetwork.org/drug-disposal](http://www.UPCNetwork.org/drug-disposal)



## Other Tips

- Talk to your children about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs. Let them know that experimenting with prescription drugs can lead to addiction, overdose or even death.
- Make sure teens understand abusing prescription drugs is illegal, including sharing them with friends.
- Be a positive role model when using prescription drugs yourself.
- Educate teens about following medication instructions and dosages.
- Supervise your child's activities, know who their friends are, and monitor their surroundings.



What You Can Do/Prevention

## Resources



### Dial Help, Inc.

Available 24/7 to for resources and support. Free Safety Net Program to assist people in finding and accessing treatment and other resources. Call 482-HELP, text 35NEEDS, or chat online at [www.DialHelp.org](http://www.DialHelp.org)

### Safely Dispose of Prescription Drugs

Safe prescription drug disposal is an important part of addressing prescription drug abuse. Find county-by-county disposal sites online at [www.upctc.com/drug-disposal](http://www.upctc.com/drug-disposal)

### Parent Talk Kit: Tips for Talking and What to Say to Prevent Drug and Alcohol Abuse

[medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/parent\\_talk\\_kit.pdf](http://medicineabuseproject.org/assets/documents/parent_talk_kit.pdf)

### You're in Control: Using Prescription Medicine Responsibly

[store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA12-4678B3/SMA12-4678B3.pdf](http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA12-4678B3/SMA12-4678B3.pdf)

### Drug Guide: A Parent's Guide to the Legal Drugs Kids are Using and Abusing

[www.drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/drug-guide-2.pdf](http://www.drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/drug-guide-2.pdf)

### Local Communities That Care (CTC) Coalitions

Find the coalition working to create safer, healthier communities for youth in your county: [www.upctc.com](http://www.upctc.com)



Alger County Communities That Care



Dickinson Iron  
Communities That Care

MACKINAC COUNTY  
COMMUNITIES  
THAT CARE



# MYTH

Prescription painkillers, even if they are prescribed by a doctor, are not addictive.

# FACT

Prescription painkillers act on the same site in the brain as heroin and can be highly addictive.

# MYTH

There is nothing wrong with possessing prescription drugs without a prescription or sharing them with friends.

# FACT

Possessing prescription drugs without a prescription could result in criminal prosecution. Illegal distribution of prescription drugs is a Federal drug violation, punishable by up to five years in Federal prison.

# MYTH

Prescription medications are more difficult to obtain than illegal drugs.

# FACT

Youth report that these drugs are easily obtained from family and friends in medicine cabinets, kitchen cabinets, night stands and purses.

## Upper Peninsula Communities That Care #UPCTC



Funding for our Communities That Care (CTC) coalitions provided by NorthCare.