

# WHAT'S TRENDING?

## YOUTH PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE

The misuse of prescription drugs occurs when medications are taken in a way that deviates from the guidance of a healthcare provider. This includes:

- Taking medications that were not prescribed to you
- Exceeding prescribed dosage
- Consuming prescription drugs for non-medical purposes



Just because a drug is a legal prescription drug does not mean it is safe. They can be just as hazardous as illegal drugs if taken incorrectly.

**12%** of students reported ever misusing prescription opioids in 2021<sup>1</sup>

**6%** of adolescents aged 12-17 reported currently misusing prescription opioids.<sup>2</sup>

### Types of Commonly Misused Prescription Drugs

#### Opioids

Pain relievers like oxycodone and morphine.

#### Stimulants

Medications for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) such as Adderall and Ritalin.

#### Depressants

Drugs like benzodiazepines used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders.

### Counterfeit Pills

Counterfeit pills often contain illicitly manufactured fentanyl (IMFs), illicit benzodiazepines or other illicit drugs, and have increased the risk of fatal overdose. From 2019 to 2021, counterfeit pill evidence was present in 25% of overdose deaths in adolescents age 10 to 19.<sup>3</sup> The proliferation of counterfeit pills is particularly concerning for adolescents given their availability on social media and marketing aimed toward youth.<sup>4</sup>

### What Can Communities Do?

**Advocate for Naloxone Utilization:** Encourage the provision and use of overdose reversal drugs like naloxone, which can help reverse an opioid overdose.

**Provide Youth Education:** Offer guidance to young individuals on the risks associated with counterfeit pills. Inform youth that prescription drugs are not “safer” than illicit drugs and should only be used as prescribed by a physician.

**Promotion of Responsible Prescribing Practices:** Community coalitions can champion responsible prescribing practices among healthcare providers. This could involve offering training and resources to ensure healthcare professionals thoroughly evaluate young patients before prescribing stimulants or opioids.

**Encourage Disposal Programs and Medication Lock Boxes:** Advocate for secure storage of medications and the proper disposal of unused drugs to prevent diversion.

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[1] HOOTS, B. E., LI, J., FELDMAN HERTZ, M., ESSER, M. B., RICO, A., ZAVALA, E., & JONES, C. (N.D.). ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCE USE BEFORE AND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS — YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY, UNITED STATES, 2021. NATIONAL CENTER FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION. [HTTPS://WWW.NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/PMC/ARTICLES/PMC10156154/PDF/SU7201A10.PDF](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10156154/pdf/SU7201A10.pdf)

[2] KEY SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS IN THE UNITED STATES: RESULTS FROM THE 2022 NATIONAL SURVEY ON DRUG USE AND HEALTH. (N.D.). [KEY SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS IN THE UNITED STATES: RESULTS FROM THE 2022 NATIONAL SURVEY ON DRUG USE AND HEALTH \(SAMHSA.GOV\)](https://www.samhsa.gov/2k22/national-survey-on-drug-use-and-health)

[3] KEATING, D., & BERNSTEIN, L. (N.D.). A RECORD 100,000 OVERDOSE DEATHS IN 12 MONTHS, DRIVEN BY OPIOIDS, FENTANYL. WASHINGTON POST. [A RECORD 100,000 OVERDOSE DEATHS IN 12 MONTHS, DRIVEN BY OPIOIDS, FENTANYL - THE WASHINGTON POST](https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/a-record-100-000-overdose-deaths-in-12-months-driven-by-opioids-fentanyl-2023-09-26/)

[4] TANZ, L. J., DINWIDDIE, A. T., MATTSO, C. L., O'DONNELL, J., & DAVIS, N. L. (2022B, DECEMBER 15). DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS AMONG PERSONS AGED 10-19 YEARS - UNITED STATES, JULY 2019-DECEMBER 2021. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION. [DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS AMONG PERSONS AGED 10-19 YEARS - UNITED STATES, JULY 2019-DECEMBER 2021 | MMWR \(CDC.GOV\)](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/mmwr.mm49.e011a.htm)

[5] SCHOOL STRESS: PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT ABUSE. PARTNERSHIP TO END ADDICTION. (2023, SEPTEMBER 26). [SCHOOL STRESS: PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT ABUSE. PARTNERSHIP TO END ADDICTION. \(2023, SEPTEMBER 26\), SCHOOL STRESS: PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT ABUSE - PARTNERSHIP TO END ADDICTION \(DRUGFREE.ORG\)](https://www.drugfree.org/school-stress-prescription-stimulant-abuse-partnership-to-end-addiction)