

Myth Busting: The Truth About Prescription Drug Abuse

(adapted from [Prescription Drug Abuse Series by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions](#))

Learning Objective: Discover the prevalence of teenagers abusing prescription drugs and recognize how this abuse is related to being misinformed. Learn the facts behind some misconceptions many teenagers have about misusing prescription medications.

1. Watch this 5 minute clip: [Myth Busting](#)

2. Exploration: Identify the three misconceptions that are highlighted in the video segment.

- Myth #1: Prescription medicines, even if they are not prescribed by a doctor, are much safer than illegal drugs.
- Myth #2: Using medicines without a prescription, only once in a while, is okay.
- Myth #3: Prescription pain relievers are not addictive

3. Discuss:

- Why do teenagers buy into these myths?
- What common beliefs, misconceptions, behaviors, habits, etc. contribute to the existence of these myths in teen culture?
- What new information did you learn from the video segment?
- What questions do you have?
- Summarize the myths presented in the video and how/why they are incorrect.
- What is your opinion on how these myths become common beliefs among teenagers?
- Have you encountered these myths in your own life, in school, at home,

among friends, etc.?

- Discuss these statistics:

- “Two in five teens (40 percent or 9.4 million) agree that Rx medicines, even if they are not prescribed by a doctor, are “much safer” to use than illegal drugs.”

http://www.drugfree.org/Files/Full_Teen_Report

- • “Nearly one-third of teens (31 percent or 7.3 million) believe there’s “nothing wrong” with using Rx medicines without a prescription ‘once in a while.’” *http://www.drugfree.org/Files/Full_Teen_Report*

- • “Nearly 3 out of 10 teens (29 percent or 6.8 million) believe prescription pain relievers – even if not prescribed by a doctor – are not addictive.” *http://www.drugfree.org/Files/Full_Teen_Report*
- “From 2002 to 2006, the rate of current use of marijuana among young adults aged 18 to 25 declined from 17.3 to 16.3 percent. Past month nonmedical use of prescription-type drugs among young adults increased from 5.4 percent in 2002 to 6.4 percent in 2006. This was primarily due to an increase in the rate of pain reliever use, which was 4.1 percent in 2002 and 4.9 percent in 2006. However, nonmedical use of tranquilizers also increased over the 5-year period (from 1.6 to 2.0 percent).”

<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/2k6Results.pdf>

- “Nearly one in five teens (19 %, or 4.5 million) has tried taking prescription medication to get high and one in 10 teens (10 %, or 2.4 million) report abusing cough medicine to get high. Those numbers are on par with, or higher than, the abuse of illicit drugs such as cocaine or crack (10 percent), methamphetamines (8 %), Ecstasy (8 %) and heroin (5 %).”

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- “Annual prevalence rates in 2007 for OxyContin use are 1.8 percent (8th grade survey), 3.9 percent (10th grade survey), and 5.3 percent (12th grade survey). In other words, at least one in every twenty high school seniors has at least tried this powerful narcotic drug in the past

year.” *www.monitoringthefuture.org ; accessed 12/13/07.*