

Prescription Drug Abuse

NIDAMED Patient Resources Series

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What You Need To Know

Prescription drug abuse is the use of a medication not prescribed for you, in a way other than prescribed (for example, taking too much), or to get high.

When abused, prescription drugs can be as dangerous as "street" drugs, with similar effects on the brain, including the possibility of addiction.

Prescription drug abuse is illegal, even though most abusers get them from friends and family.

Almost 2.2 million people 12 and older abused prescription opioids, including pain relievers, stimulants, and sedatives, for the first time in 2009 (similar to marijuana).

Treatment Options

Available treatments depend on the type of medication being abused.

For Pain Relievers: Addiction treatments include medications combined with behavioral therapy.

For Stimulants: Behavioral therapies can be useful; studies are under way to discover effective medications.

For Sedatives: Addicted patients should undergo medically supervised detoxification combined with behavioral therapy.

Resources

NIDA's Web site (<http://www.drugabuse.gov>) has information on all aspects of drug abuse, such as drug effects on the brain and body, prevention of drug use among young people, latest research on addiction treatment, and U.S. trends and statistics.

NIDA also has a teen Web site devoted to information about prescription drug abuse: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/peerx>.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has many reports and bulletins available on prescription drug abuse <http://oas.samhsa.gov/prescription.htm>. Their Web site also includes a treatment locator (<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>) and other useful information.

