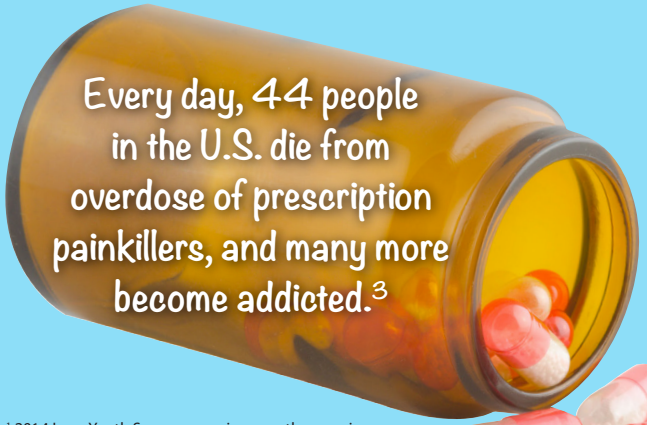
MANY IOWA TEENS AND ADULTS HAVE A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY ABOUT PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) DRUGS:

> "It's only medicine, so it's safe, right?"

Almost 1 out of 4 (24%) of Iowa middle school and high school students either do not know or do not believe using prescription drugs (not prescribed for them) puts them at risk of harm.[1]

Talking about using prescription and OTC medications needs to begin at an early age. Nearly half of young people who inject heroin surveyed in three recent studies reported abusing prescription opioids before starting to use heroin.[2]


Every day, 44 people in the U.S. die from overdose of prescription painkillers, and many more become addicted.[3]

[1] 2014 Iowa Youth Survey, www.iowayouthsurvey.iowa.gov
[2] www.drugabuse.gov./publications/research-reports/herioin
[3] http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/

RESOURCES

Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center
1-866-242-4111
www.drugfreeinfo.org

Iowa Medicine Take Back
http://tinyurl.com/IowaRxTB

National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.nida.nih.gov

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids
www.drugfree.org

AC4C Alliance of Coalitions For Change

Partnership @ DrugFreeIowa.org

www.ac4c.org

Public Safety Division of Narcotics Enforcement

IDPH Iowa Department of Public Health

Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy — Iowa — Prevention Treatment Enforcement

www.iowa.gov/odcp

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Medicine Abuse in Iowa

A FAMILY GUIDE TO PREVENTION

Commonly Abused Medicines

Opioids
Narcotic pain killers (e.g. morphine, codeine, oxycodone, fentanyl, hydrocodone, methadone)

Stimulants
Prescribed to treat narcolepsy and attention deficit or hyperactivity disorder (e.g. Adderall, Ritalin)

Central Nervous System Depressants
Used to treat anxiety or sleep disorders (e.g. Xanax, Valium)

Dextromethorphan (DXM)
A cough suppressant

There were 14.9 prescriptions filled per capita at Iowa retail pharmacies in 2014.[4] How many prescriptions are in your home?

Safety Tips

Take inventory and monitor the prescription and OTC drugs in your home. Store them in a locked area if you have concerns they are being abused.

Dispose of old and unused medications promptly and appropriately. Your pharmacist can provide information about how and where to dispose of OTC and prescription drugs.

Monitor your credit card statement and internet use in your home. It's easy for anyone to purchase a prescription drugs over the internet.

TALKING ABOUT MEDICINE USE

Discussion about medicine abuse presents a challenge, compared to talking about alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use-which are illegal for youth to use. Medicine is designed to help people. Make sure your child understands you are talking about intentionally using these drugs to get high.

Take time to learn about the abuse of these drugs. There's a wealth of information on the internet. Talk about specific drugs and how they affect the body and people's lives. Include information on side affects and symptoms of overdose. For older youth, discuss the risks of taking drugs and driving or riding with an impaired driver.

Use teachable moments, such as when a story is on the news about these drugs or when you and your child are on an extended ride. It's OK if you don't have all the answers. It's more important that you have an open dialogue, model responsible behavior around prescription and OTC use, and young people know your expectations around drug use.

[4] http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/retail-rx-drugs-per-capita/

Why are Young Iowans Abusing Medicines?

The Four "A's"

Availability: The number of prescription and over the counter (OTC) drugs that have potential for abuse is staggering.

Access: They are easy to get.

Off the Internet—With a credit card, youth can purchase almost any prescription drug they want.

From the Family Medicine Cabinet—Legitimate family member prescriptions can be stolen a few at a time, usually without notice.

From Friends—In a phenomenon known as Pharm Parties, youth bring whatever medicines they can find and take them together in a type of pill "trail mix" usually without knowing what they are taking.

Awareness: Teens know more about prescription drugs than ever before due to aggressive media advertising and the internet.

Attitude: Many youth believe there is low risk associated with taking prescription and OTC drugs, even though they can be just as dangerous as any illegal drug if used inappropriately.

Sharing or selling prescription medication is illegal. In some cases it is considered a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a $10,000 fine.