



LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

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P.L.U.S.² Parent's Guide to Week #5

This week we will be discussing "Prescription Drug Abuse" and "OTC's" (Over the Counter drugs). As homework we asked the students to learn what they could about these drugs. The students will be taking a quiz in the form of a group game called "Drug Jeopardy – Rx and OTC Abuse". Here are some of the questions the students will be answering....see how you do:

- 1) Over-the-Counter drugs are basically safe to abuse because?
- 2) Diet Pills usually contain a huge amount of this drug?
- 3) OTC drugs can be found in the following locations? Name two.
- 4) Describe what one of these chemicals do: Infrinergy DiCaffeine Malate, Tonalin CLA, Forslean, 7-Keto DHEA, Bioperine Therea?
- 5) This chemical can stop your breathing, arrest your heart, cause a stroke, and is addictive? It can be found in many cough and cold medications.
- 6) The number 1 most abused OTC drug is?
- 7) Name three things that make abusing OTC drugs easy for kids?
- 8) Whether using street drugs, OTC's or prescription medications, drug abusers often have trouble with.....? Name 3 of the top 4.
- 9) Phenylpropanolamine is a dangerous OTC which can cause hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding into the brain) mostly in women. Which type of OTC drug is this drug typically found?
- 10) Many products containing dextromethorphan also contain a drug that resulted in 56,000 ER overdose admissions of 12-17 year olds. Name this drug?
- 11) Pain killers when mixed with this substance is a formula for death. Name this substance?
- 12) Buying RX medications on-line (over the internet) is only okay when?
- 13) Abusing this group of prescription meds is like abusing heroin. Name this group of RX meds.
- 14) This group of medical professionals can be the first line of defense in recognizing prescription drug abuse?
- 15) Name two of the top six reasons why youth say they abuse RX drugs.

So how did you do? If you're not sure I will give you the answers on next week's Parent's Guide...but here's the real question...do you feel confident in knowing the correct answers to the majority of the questions? Common sense tells us that abusing any of these drugs would be stupid, but do youth see the use of some of these substances as harmful or abusive? Your child may be experiencing pressure regarding the use of these drugs. Where will he/she get the correct information and support they need to protect them from the potential risks of falling victim to the pressure if not from you? These drugs are dangerous!

Dextromethorphan: At recommended doses, dextromethorphan produces little or no CNS depression. However, at high doses other effects begin to appear such as disorientation, confusion, pupillary dilation, and altered time perception, visual and auditory hallucinations. An overall

disturbance in thinking, senses and memory; and a fully dissociative effect (losses touch with reality) will occur. Recreationally abused doses are capable of impairing judgment, memory, language, sensation to pain, and other mental/physical performances. Following acute doses clinical and overdose symptoms are reported: excitation, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision, nystagmus, dilated pupils, body itching, rash, ataxia, sweating, hot/cold flashes, fever, hypertension, shallow respiration, urinary retention, diarrhea, opisthotonos (spasm where head and heels are bent back, and torso is bent forward), toxic psychosis (hyperactivity, marked visual and auditory hallucinations), coma, and an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature, and death.

Phenylpropanolamine: Phenylpropanolamine (fen ill proe pa NOLE a meen) is a chemical found in many OTC decongestants and diet pills. Phenylpropanolamine is actually a decongestant. It works by constricting (shrinking) blood vessels (veins and arteries) in your body. Phenylpropanolamine also causes a decrease in appetite and is used in some over-the-counter diet aids. Phenylpropanolamine has been associated with an increased risk of hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding into the brain or into tissue surrounding the brain) in women (men are may also be at risk, although lower). The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that consumers not use any products that contain phenylpropanolamine. Symptoms of a phenylpropanolamine overdose include extreme tiredness, sweating, dizziness, a slow heart beat, and a coma. If these symptoms occur seek emergency medical attention. Hemorrhagic stroke can occur with no apparent symptoms leading up to the occurrence.

So How Big is the Problem? The epidemic of overdose deaths from prescription painkillers started in Appalachia, spread from coast to coast. Prescription drug overdoses are killing more people than car accidents, homicide and suicides combined. In recent years, the number of drug overdoses in the U.S. rose from about 11,000 in 1999 to almost 20,000 in 2004¹. The CDC attributes the 62.5 percent rise in drug overdose deaths between 1999 and 2004 to a higher use of prescription painkillers and prescription sedatives. Although drug overdose deaths are historically associated with urban areas, the latest figures from the CDC show the greatest increases in rural areas between 1999 and 2004. This finding coincides with other research that shows prescription drug abuse, especially of painkillers, is increasing more rapidly in rural areas. The dramatic increase in drug overdose deaths is not driven by illegal drug use in the inner cities; it is being fueled by prescription drug abuse in white, middle-class, rural America². By 2007, more teenagers used opioid analgesics recreationally than used marijuana.³ Among youth 12-13 years: Prescription-type drugs ranks as the #1 drug of choice (2%), followed by Inhalants (1.2%), and then Marijuana (0.9%). In the 14-15 year old group: Marijuana becomes the #1 drug of choice (5.8%), followed by Prescription-type drugs (3.1%), and then Inhalants (1.7%).

Here are the reasons why kids say they take RX meds illegally:

1. 62% - easy to get from parents' medicine cabinets.
2. 35% - safer to use than illegal drugs.
3. 33% - there is less shame attached to using RX meds.
4. 31% - nothing wrong with using RX meds without a doctor's prescription.
5. 29% - prescription pain relievers are not addictive (*wrong!!!!*).

Prescription drug and Over-the-Counter drug abuse is a huge problem and we really need to have conversation with our children about the dangers and harmful effects of abusing prescription drugs!

1 Centers for Disease Control. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. February 9, 2007 / 56(05);93-96

2 Centers for Disease Control. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. February 9, 2007 / 56(05);93-96

3 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The Administration, Office of Applied Studies; 2007. Report No.: DHHS pub. no. SMA 07-4293.