

Know! October is Medicine Abuse Awareness Month (Part I)

Did you KNOW!?

- One in six youth nationwide abuses medicine.¹
- Every day, 2,000 kids get high for the first time on a prescription drug.²
- Drug overdoses have now surpassed car crashes as the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S.³

October is Medicine Abuse Awareness Month - So let's get talking!

Pose these real-life scenarios to your children and ask them to decide whether or not it is medicine abuse (then encourage them to expand on their yes/no answer):

"My face is swollen, bruised and hurting terribly from my wisdom tooth surgery. My prescription says to take two pills, but this pain is much worse than I imagined, so I am going to double the dosage and see if that helps."

"I have a really important math test and I have to do well on it. This kid at school said he has a pill that will help me focus as I study. I am only going to do it this one time and I am not doing it to get high."

"I was finally invited to hang out with this group of kids from school. So we're all together at this party and this girl hands me a pill. She said it was just for fun and that it was safe; a prescription pill. I really didn't want to take it, but I did. I fell to the pressure, but it won't happen again, I promise."

"My mom has a prescription for her migraine headaches. Today, after school, I had a really bad headache, so I decided to take one of her pills."

The above scenarios are all examples of prescription drug misuse and abuse. Why? In definition, prescription drug misuse and abuse occurs when a prescribed medicine is taken:

- by someone other than the intended user;
- in an alternate manner, dosage or time period than prescribed (even when taken by the intended user).

Those who use medicine to get "high" are obvious abusers. But what about those who use for other reasons, like; relieving pain, improving grades, to remain alert, fall asleep, or to lose weight, what if they are attempting to alleviate anxiety or depression? No matter how "good" of a reason it appears to be, if a prescribed medicine is being used by an unintended person, or in an alternate manner, dosage or time period, it is considered medicine abuse.

***Parent Tips and more can be found in the Know!
Visit: www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org***

¹ 2011 MetLife Foundation Partnership Attitude Tracking Study.

² United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Additional Sources:

The Partnership at Drugfree.org

The Medicine Abuse Project

The Cardinal Health Foundation - The Generation Rx Initiative