

# INSPIRED

## To Make Healthy Choices

More people die from accidental drug overdoses than auto accidents each year.

Talk to your children about the dangers of prescription drug use.

**Prescription drug use and abuse greatly impacts the health and safety of our community. Overdoses on prescription painkillers kill 44 people daily in the U.S. and many more become addicted on a daily basis.**

Overprescribing leads to more abuse and more overdoses. **Overdose rates are higher in states where prescription painkillers are prescribed more frequently.**

**Did you know** that the U.S. makes up 5% of the world's population but **uses more than 80% of the global supply of painkiller medication?**

Adolescents are more likely than young adults to become dependent on prescription medication. **After marijuana and alcohol, prescription and over-the-counter drugs are the most commonly abused substances by Americans 14 and older.**

Some of the other trends are:

- Each year, almost **60,000** children under the age of five visit hospital emergency rooms due to **unsupervised medicine ingestions.**
- 25% of high school teenagers have experimented with misappropriated prescription drugs.
- **More than 40% of teens who misused or abused prescription drugs obtained them from their parents' medicine cabinet.**
- Even though only 13% of the population is elderly, they use about 33% of the prescription medications.
- **45-54 year olds are most likely to die from an accidental drug overdose.**

**Why is there an increase in prescription drug abuse?** Some of the contributing factors are that people:

- ▶ Become addicted while using medication as a prescription.
- ▶ Use them to relax or escape ("self-medicate").
- ▶ Use them to fit in.
- ▶ Use them to get an "edge." In an increasingly competitive school environment, many teenagers and college students are using prescription stimulants for this reason. They may **use them to help improve their focus while studying, or to help them stay awake.**
- ▶ Find them easier to obtain than illicit drugs.
- ▶ **Perceive that "legal" prescription drugs are safe.**

**Here are a few small steps that can make an important difference in safeguarding lives:**

- Take medication only as prescribed;
- **Do not share your medications with anyone;**
- Store your medications securely; and
- **Monitor the quantities of your prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines.**

**Reduce the accessibility of prescription drugs** by disposing of them in a safe and environmentally friendly manner:

- Be proactive and **dispose of unused, unwanted or expired medications.**
- **DO NOT** flush or pour unused medication down the sink or drain (**protect our water**).
- Dispose of your unwanted drugs during Take Back programs or **bring them to a local drop box.** Check [www.stoprxabuseinga.org/prescription-drug-disposal.html](http://www.stoprxabuseinga.org/prescription-drug-disposal.html) for locations in Georgia.

**Talk to your family and neighbors! It could save a life!**

Ask friends & family to safeguard their prescription drugs.

Know someone who needs help? Call the 24-hour helpline at **1-800-662-HELP.**

For more information:  
**Rx ABUSE PREVENTION**  
[www.guideinc.org](http://www.guideinc.org)

