



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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Prevent Prescription Overdose Deaths: Lock Your Meds

Prescription drug misuse occurs when someone uses a medication that was prescribed for someone else, or when someone uses their own medication in a way not intended by their doctor. Prescription drug misuse can affect all age groups. Regardless of age, there are many reasons someone might misuse prescription medications, such wanting to “fit in,” feel good or get high, relieve depression and anxiety, help them cope with life’s stresses, sleep better or increase their alertness and concentration power, or even becoming addicted to medication originally prescribed for pain. Whatever the reason, people often believe that prescription medications provide a legal and “medically safe high,” since they are prescribed by a doctor. The three most commonly misused classes of medications are opioids, central nervous system depressants, and stimulants.

47.2% of people who misuse prescription medications get them from friends and family. Here are five steps that you can take to prevent prescription drug misuse or abuse:

- 1. Talk with your doctor about your meds.** Confirm with your doctor that the dose and quantity of your medication, and the medications of your children, is the lowest safe and effective dose possible. Ask about other options to the most commonly abused medications. Ask your doctor to help you learn about your medication and treatment alternatives.
- 2. Properly secure and monitor your meds.** Only 9.3% of children who misuse prescription medications say they get them from a stranger, a drug dealer or some other way. Prevent your child, friend or loved one from abusing your medications by securing them so they cannot be accessed. They can be secured in a medication lockbox or pouch, locked cabinet, locked closet, or out of reach. Further safeguard all medicines that have to remain at home by monitoring quantities. Regularly check to see if anything is missing. Visit lockyourmeds.org for a home medicine inventory card that can help you keep track of your medications.
- 3. Safely and properly Dispose of old, expired or unused meds.** Prevent your child, friend or loved one from abusing your medications by disposing of them through a permanent drop box in your community such as at the Jackson County Sheriff’s Office. NEVER flush your medications down the drain or toilet, unless the label says it is safe to do so. Learn more about safe disposal and find a drop box in your community at lockyourmeds.org.
- 4. Educate yourself & your Family.** Learn about the most commonly abused types of prescription medications and their associated signs and symptoms. Then, communicate the dangers to your child, friends or loved ones regularly; once is not enough. Make time to talk



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and create an environment where your child, friend or loved one feels safe to talk to you about questions and/or concerns they have about Rx drug misuse and abuse. Be observant of their actions, behaviors, and mood. Visit lockyourmeds.org for more info on commonly abused prescription medications and their signs and symptoms.

5. Pass it on. Share your knowledge and support with friends, family and others. Together, you can create a tipping point for change.

This message was provided through the Jackson County Department of Public Health's Prevent Prescription Overdose Deaths grant, through the NC Lock Your Meds Campaign. To receive a free medication lock box or pouch, visit the Jackson County Public Library during normal business hours.

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