

Parents360 Rx Medicine Abuse Action Kit Planning & Discussion Guide

Thank you for your interest in the Parents360 Rx Medicine Abuse Action Kit. The Kit is an easy-to-use tool you can use to share information with parents and other concerned citizens about the real dangers of medicine abuse and the actions that can be taken to prevent and respond to it. The centerpiece of the Kit is the Parents360 Rx video, which was created to be delivered to parents and other caregivers in a relaxed, casual setting.

What Do You Need?

- A place to meet. This can be your home, a library, church hall, school or community meeting room, a café or local restaurant. You simply want enough space for everyone to be seated comfortably. It can also be delivered in your place of work as a “lunch and learn” presentation or at a meeting of a club or organization of which you are a member.
- A DVD player and television, or a computer connected to a video monitor or projector.
- The Parents360 Rx video.
- Enough copies of the Taking Action documents for your guests

Invite Your Guests

Invite your guests in the same way that you would invite them to any other gathering – by phone, e-mail, and social media or in any way that works best for you. Be sure to let your guests know when and where the event will happen. For the “what,” you can use the following text in your invitation:

“I would like you to join me and some friends to watch and discuss a video called ‘Parents360: Rx’ that was created by The Partnership at Drugfree.org. The video is about 11 minutes long, and the whole event should take less than an hour.”

Let your guests know why you want to meet, specifically, why is it important to you to bring your friends and family together to discuss medicine abuse.

At Your Event

Thank your guests for coming. If your guests don’t know each other, ask them to introduce themselves. Introduce the video. Let your guests know that:

- This video was created by The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids with support from the U.S. Department of Justice.
- It runs about 11 minutes.
- The families featured are real people – not actors.

Discussion Guide:

After playing the video, discuss it with your guests. Every conversation about the video will be different, and you can adapt your discussion to fit the needs of your attendees. The following are some key questions to help you start a good conversation:

Question: *“What are your immediate responses? In just a few words, what do you think or feel about what you just saw?”* Try to get as many people to respond as possible, and try to limit responses to a few words. One guest’s strong opinions may prevent others from sharing their views. Ask guests to hold their questions until everyone has shared their initial response.

Question: “What was the most surprising thing that you learned about medicine abuse from the video?” Ask audience members share what they know about teen prescription drug abuse. Some of the key points you want to address are the facts that:

- Many teens say they’ve used.
- Most kids get the drugs at home/from friends.
- Too many parents aren’t talking to their kids about Rx drug abuse.

Question: “*What do you think these families wish they could have done differently?*” It is important to frame this question in a way that doesn’t blame families, but asks us to learn from their experiences. Two points you want to be sure to address are the importance of limiting access to prescription drugs and talking to your kids about medicine abuse.

The following are some tips to have a good discussion:

- Set a non-confrontational tone. No one should be there to accuse or criticize another guest or their family.
- Encourage communication by avoiding criticism. Nothing shuts down open dialogue like embarrassment.
- Use a “pivot” when necessary. Pivoting means changing the topic back to the issue that you want to talk about. If an audience member makes a statement that is not germane to your conversation, you “pivot,” by saying “that’s really interesting – I’d like to hear some other responses to our main question.”
- If you simply are not comfortable leading the discussion, ask a friend who may perform this role in their work, or who has participated in book clubs.
- Keep the conversation focused on actions that can be taken to help prevent and respond to medicine abuse in your homes, and in your community.

Motivating Action:

After you feel that everyone has had the opportunity to share their views, it is important to move on to the next step of your gathering: **Taking Action**. The Taking Action handouts consist of five documents. Share and discuss each document with your guests.

- Taking Action Against Medicine Abuse: Outlines the actions individuals can take to prevent and respond to medicine abuse. The other documents address the same issues in greater detail. If you can only hand out one document this is the one to use.
- Action 1: Three Steps to Safeguard your Home
- Action 2: Know the Signs and Symptoms of Medicine Abuse
- Action 3: Talk to Your Family, Friends and Other Parents
- Action 4: Share the Information with Others

We also ask for **your** assistance by completing an event report at the bottom of this page on our website:

<http://starttalking.ohio.gov/Programming/Parents360Rx.aspx>

Please ask guests for their help by completing a brief online survey at the same location.

If a question arises that you cannot answer, or if you would like to offer direct feedback on the presentation, please email info@starttalking.ohio.gov

Taking Action Against Medicine Abuse

Did You Know?

- 1 in 6 teens has used a prescription drug in order to get high or change their mood.
- Two-thirds of teens who abuse pain relievers say they get them from family members and friends.
- More Americans die from drug overdoses than in car crashes.
- One person dies every 19 minutes from drug overdose in the United States and this increasing trend is driven by Rx painkillers.

Now that you know the facts, take action to protect your children your loved ones, and yourself from prescription medicine abuse.

Action 1: Three Steps to Safeguard your Home

1. **Monitor.** Keep track of the amounts of your prescriptions, control your kids' medicines and encourage your friends and relatives, especially grandparents, to monitor and secure their own.
2. **Secure Your Medicine.** Keep prescription medicine secure, preferably locked, in a place that your kids and visitors to your home will not easily find.
3. **Dispose Properly of Your Unused Medicine.** Crush and mix it with unpleasant garbage, or find a medicine take-back site near you. Never flush down the toilet or sink drain.

Action 2: Know the Signs and Symptoms of Medicine Abuse

1. **Educate Yourself.** The best way to prevent prescription drug abuse is to learn about the issue. That way, you can effectively present the facts when talking to your teen. Go to the Start Talking! Website at starttalking.ohio.gov.
2. **Get Help.** If you think your child has a problem with prescription drugs or over-the-counter cough medicine, please visit drugfree.org/timetogethelp or call the Partnership's Parents Toll-Free Helpline to speak to a parent specialist at **1-855-DRUGFREE (1-855-378-4373)**.

Action 3: Talk to Your Family, Friends and Other Parents:

Talk to your kids, your family, your friends, and other parents about the risks of abusing prescription drugs and over-the-counter cough medicine. Children who learn a lot about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50 percent less likely to use drugs than those who do not get that critical message at home. If you need help Start Talking!, email info@starttalking.ohio.gov

Action 4: Share the Information with Others:

You can make a real difference in the lives of your family, loved ones, friends, co-workers and neighbors by sharing this information via email and social media. Learn how at starttalking.ohio.gov

Action 1

Three Steps to Safeguard Your Home

Make sure the teens in your life don't have access to your medicine. Find out how to monitor, secure and properly dispose of unused and expired prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicine in your home.

STEP 1: MONITOR

How aware are you of the quantities that are currently in your home?

- Start by taking note of how many pills are in each of your prescription bottles or pill packets and keep track of your refills.
- If your teen has been prescribed a medicine, be sure you control the medicine, and monitor dosages and refills.
- Make sure your friends and relatives — especially grandparents — are also aware of the risks. Encourage them to regularly monitor their own medicines.

STEP 2: SECURE

- Take prescription medicine out of the medicine cabinet and secure them in a place only you know about.
- If possible, keep all medicines, both prescription and over-the-counter, in a safe place, such as a locked cabinet your teen cannot access.
- Tell relatives, especially grandparents, to lock up their medicine or keep them in a safe place.

STEP 3: DISPOSE

- Take an inventory of all of the medicine in your home. Start by discarding expired or unused Rx and OTC medicine when your teens are not home.
- Teenagers will retrieve discarded prescription medicine from the trash. To help prevent this from happening, mix the medicine with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter.
- Do not flush medicine down the toilet or sink drain.
- To help prevent unauthorized refills and protect your family's privacy, remove any personal, identifiable information from prescription bottles or pill packages before you throw them away.
- Learn more about safeguarding and disposing of medicine at [**MedicineAbuseProject.org**](http://MedicineAbuseProject.org) and find a medicine take-back location near you.

Action 2

Know the Signs and Symptoms of Medicine Abuse

The best way to prevent prescription drug abuse is to learn about the issue. That way, you can effectively present the facts when talking to your teen.

Recognize the signs of prescription drug abuse:

- ✓ Fatigue, red or glazed eyes, and repeated health complaints
- ✓ Sudden mood changes, including irritability, negative attitude, personality changes, and general lack of interest in hobbies/activities
- ✓ Secretiveness and withdrawing from family
- ✓ Decreased or obsessive interest in school work
- ✓ Missing prescription medicines from your medicine cabinet
- ✓ Additional filled prescriptions on your pharmacy record that you did not order

The signs and symptoms of prescription medicine abuse depend on the particular drug. Because of their mind-altering properties, the most commonly abused prescription drugs are: opioid painkillers, anti-anxiety medications/sedatives, and stimulants.

| Pain Reliever Abuse (Opioid painkillers-used to treat pain) | Depressant Abuse (Anti-anxiety medication and sedatives) | Stimulant Abuse (Used to treat ADHD and certain sleep disorders) |
|---|---|---|
| Depression Low blood pressure Decreased breathing rate Confusion Sweating Constricted pupils | Drowsiness Confusion Poor judgment Dizziness Slurred speech Respiratory depression | Weight loss, Agitation, Irritability, Insomnia, High blood pressure, Irregular heartbeat, Anxiety, Impulsive behavior |

When to see a doctor: Talk to your doctor if you think you or someone you know may have a problem with prescription drug use. You may feel embarrassed to talk to your doctor about it — but remember that medical professionals are trained to help you, not judge you. Identifying prescription drug abuse as soon as possible is important. It's easier to tackle the problem early before it becomes an addiction and leads to more serious problems.

Feeling overwhelmed with your child's drug problem?
Call our Parents Toll-Free Helpline 1-855-DRUGFREE (1-855-378-4373)

Action 3

Talk to Your Family, Friends and Other Parents

If you are a parent, or any other adult who takes care of children, talk to your kids about the risks of abusing prescription drugs and over-the-counter cough medicine. Children who learn a lot about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to **50** percent less likely to use drugs than those who do not get this information at home.

Practical Advice for Parents:

As a parent, teach your teen to:

- ✓ Respect the power of medicine and use it properly.
- ✓ Recognize that all medicines, including prescription medications, have risks along with benefits. The risks tend to increase dramatically when medicines are abused.
- ✓ Take responsibility for learning how to take prescription medicines safely and appropriately, and seek help at the first sign of a problem for their own or a friend's abuse.

Share What You Know:

If you're a parent, share information with family, friends and neighbors. If you're a doctor or other health care provider, share educational materials with your patients. If you're a community leader or law enforcement official, share information with the people in your community. If you're a teacher, school nurse or administrator, share information with the parents and students in your school.

If you are a parent you should:

- Learn how to say it- Conversations are the most powerful tools parents can use to connect with and protect their kids from the dangers of drugs and alcohol.
- Learn what to say- about the dangers of street drugs and alcohol; it's also essential to address the abuse of prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicine.
- Learn how to answer the question- "Did you do drugs?" It isn't about your past; it's about your child's future.
- Learn how to teach your kids to turn down drugs- there's no way you can shield your kids from finding out that street drugs, alcohol and tobacco exist- but you can help your child reject offers to try them.

For more information about talking to your kids and loved ones about drug and alcohol abuse, visit starttalking.ohio.gov or email info@starttalking.ohio.gov

Action 4

Share the Information with Others

You can make a real difference in the lives of your family, friends, loved ones, co-workers and neighbors by sharing information about prescription medicine abuse. Below, please find wording you can use to share information on your website, through your Facebook or Twitter account, or in an email.

The words below are a starting point – please share your own thoughts, feelings and reactions. Let the people in your life know that you care about them by letting them know what they can do to end medicine abuse.

Text you can use for a promotion on your own website:

Every day, more than 2,000 kids use a prescription drug to get high for the first time. Medicine abuse is an epidemic affecting families and teenagers across the country.

The Parents260 Rx Action Toolkit is an easy-to-use tool that you can use to share information with parents and other concerned citizens about the real dangers of medicine abuse and the actions that can be taken to prevent and respond to it. Check it out at starttalking.ohio.gov

Text you can use to share the Kit with your Facebook friends:

Every day, more than 2,000 kids use a prescription drug to get high for the first time. I found this easy-to-use tool that you can use to share information with other parents and your community about medicine abuse – an epidemic affecting teens like ours all over the country. Check it out at starttalking.ohio.gov

Text you can use to share the Kit with your Twitter followers:

Medicine abuse is an epidemic. Spread the word to family and friends with the Parents360 Rx Action Toolkit to help #endmedicineabuse: starttalking.ohio.gov

Text you can use in an email to friends:

Every day, more than 2,000 kids use a prescription drug to get high for the first time. Medicine abuse is an epidemic affecting families and teenagers across the country.

I wanted to share with you an easy-to-use tool that you can use to share information with other parents and your community about medicine abuse. The Parents260 Rx Action Toolkit can help you spread the word about the real dangers of medicine abuse and the actions that can be taken to prevent and respond to it. Check it out at starttalking.ohio.gov

If you represent an organization, you can also promote the Toolkit through your organization's website, newsletter, or Facebook or Twitter account.