

**63% of teens get drugs from parents' medicine cabinets**

*(PAT Study, 2009)*

**Arkansas has one of the highest rates of nonmedical pain reliever use among 12 to 25 year olds.** *(DHHS)*

**21% of Arkansas high school seniors say they've abused Rx drugs.** *(APNA Student Survey, 2009)*

**33% of teens think "there's nothing wrong" with using Rx drugs**  
*(SAMHSA)*

**NOTE:** *When used correctly and under a doctor's supervision, Rx medicines are safe and effective.*

### Resources

**National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE)** is a multidisciplinary coalition of over 100 organizations working to stimulate and improve communication of information on appropriate medicine use to consumers and health care professions. **(301) 656-8565** or [www.talkaboutrx.org](http://www.talkaboutrx.org)

#### Arkansas DEA National Takeback Initiative

An Arkansas statewide initiative to encourage people to bring back their unused or unneeded drugs for proper disposal. The website lists take back sites along with Arkansas-specific statistics. [www.artakeback.org](http://www.artakeback.org)

**National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Information for Parents and Teachers** provides materials developed specifically with parents in mind. [www.nida.nih.gov/parent-teacher.html](http://www.nida.nih.gov/parent-teacher.html)

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** The Family Guide is a public education website that serves as a resource to keep youth mentally healthy and drug free. **(240) 276-2548** or [www.family.samhsa.gov](http://www.family.samhsa.gov)

**The Partnership for a Drug-Free America** A nonprofit organization that unites parents, scientists and communications professionals to help families raise healthy drug-free children. [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)

**ioit2me** Another Arkansas-specific drug prevention website. [www.ioit2me.com](http://www.ioit2me.com)

# Prescription Drug Abuse:

when families become drug dealers



**Ark. 6th graders abuse prescription drugs more than any other substance except alcohol and cigarettes.** *(APNA, 2008)*



Margaret Harris, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor – Health with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Little Rock.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas. The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

MP491-PD-4-11N



# Generation Rx

## The hidden dangers of Rx abuse:

- Dependence
- Slower brain activity
- Irregular heartbeats
- Dangerously high body temperature
- Heart failure
- Lethal seizures
- Accidental overdose
- Increased possibility of suicide attempts

Many parents talk to teens about the harm illegal drugs can cause. But did you know that prescription medicine can be dangerous too? Youth age 12 to 25 have the highest rates of Rx abuse.

Teens often believe that medicine is much safer to use than illegal drugs and that pain relievers are not addictive. Not realizing the risks, teens are turning to prescription drugs to fit in with friends or help cope with stress. And prescription drugs are much easier to get than illegal drugs.

**Many teens believe that medicine is much safer to use than illegal drugs.**

**1 in 5 teens share their prescription drugs with friends.** (Join Together, 2009)

As a parent or someone who interacts with teens, this is where you come in. It's important to explain to your teen the dangers of Rx drug abuse. If you recognize any of the warning signs, contact the resources provided in this brochure, your teen's physician or other health care professional.

## What you can do:

- **Recognize the Risks** — all medicines, including prescription and over-the-counter, have risks along with benefits. These risks increase dramatically when they are abused.
- **Talk to your teen** about Rx medicines. Provide a safe, open environment for your teen to talk about abuse issues.
- **Teach your teen respect** for the power of medicine and how to use it properly.

## Warning Signs:

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

- **Avoid stockpiling medicines.** Keep them in a safe place or locked up. Dispose of unused medications promptly.

- **Properly dispose of unused Rx medicines** by taking them to your community take-back program. If none is present, mix unused meds with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter; put the mixture in a sealed, nondescript container and throw it in the trash. *Do not flush* unused medications.

- **Seek help** at the first sign of a problem. Alert your family physician if you are concerned. Ask him to speak to your teen about the importance of proper medicine use.

