

TEEN: I know it's not "ok" to use drugs, but at least it's a medicine prescribed by a doctor, which is better than an illegal drug off the street.

PARENT: You're right on your first point, it's not ok to use drugs (*make clear your view*). And I understand why you would think a medicine prescribed by doctors is safer than illegal street drugs, but the fact is **legal does not equal safe**. Medicines have a system which controls who can get them and when. That system is there for a reason: to protect us.

TEEN: This medicine helped my friend's mom with her back pain, so there is nothing wrong with borrowing a few pills to help with my ankle injury.

PARENT: While you may think your injury or pain is similar, there are many other things a doctor thinks about when prescribing a medication including: medical history, allergies, side effects, a person's weight, interactions with other medicines you take, etc. By borrowing or sharing a prescribed medication you risk making the health condition worse for yourself or someone else. **It is also against the law to share medications.** Bottom line - this is when *sharing* is not a good thing.

Helpful hint to keep in mind when talking to teens: Keep the discussion open and the mood relaxed so that your teen does not feel defensive or afraid to share his/her feelings.

TEEN: I have heard so much hype over these pain meds. I just want to try it once. It's not a big deal.

PARENT: With the recent attention on pain meds, I can understand your curiosity, but it is important to know that even trying these medications once can be dangerous. These pain meds (also known as opiates) can cause a number of short-term side effects like nausea, constipation, fatigue & confusion. Long-term use can lead to physical dependence & addiction. Once addicted, both the body & mind crave more of it...leading a person down a dangerous path. If opiates are taken with alcohol, antihistamines (found in cold medicines) or other substances that slow the central nervous system, it can be fatal, even the first time. So using medicines to get high is a big deal!



Talking To Your Teen About Prescription Drug Abuse

TEEN: If a small dose of my prescription helped me feel good, a little more will make me feel even better.

PARENT: Give this example - you are hungry, you eat one cheeseburger, you then feel satisfied. If you eat two or even three cheeseburgers, will that make you feel even more satisfied? No - You are more likely to feel sick and overstuffed. The same is true for prescription medication. Your doctor prescribes the right amount of a medicine to help you. Take more and the side effects can be dangerous and even deadly. *More is not always better.*

There are many different examples you could use. The important thing is that you are talking. Talking with children about the risks of prescription drug abuse can positively impact their attitudes and keep them make healthy, substance-free lifestyle choices.