

Sharing Isn't Always Caring

· OPIOID DRUG HANDBOOK ·



Office of Health and Social Services

BERNALILLO COUNTY 

WE'RE MORE THAN YOU THINK

Facts & Figures

Every two years the state of New Mexico conducts the Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey (YRRS). The YRRS asks a number of questions including risk behaviors related to alcohol and drug use, unintentional injury, violence, suicidal ideation and attempts, tobacco use, sexual activity, physical activity, and nutrition; resiliency (protective) factors such as relationships in the family, school, community, and with peers; and health status issues such as body weight and asthma.

According to the 2013 YRRS Bernalillo County Students grades 9-12 reported:

- **10%** used painkillers to get high.
- **19.8%** improperly used prescription drugs.
- **34.2%** say they were offered or sold drugs on school property.
- **46.4%** say illegal drugs were readily available.
- **58.2%** knew an adult who uses drugs.

(NMDOH)



From Rx to Heroin

Nearly half of the young people who inject heroin start by abusing Rx drugs.

Teen abuse of prescription (Rx) pain medicine, also known as opioids, usually starts in two ways. Some teens start abusing it at a party or with friends because they're curious or think it will make them feel good. Others start taking it legitimately when prescribed by a doctor after an injury or dental procedure - but in some cases, legitimate use turns to dependence, abuse, addiction and then heroin use.

Follow **Katie's journey** below and learn more about how Rx drug abuse can lead teens to heroin use.

1



Katie suffers an injury that requires surgery. Throughout the healing process, she is prescribed painkillers.

Prescription drugs are now the most commonly-abused drugs among 12-13 year olds.

2



After a few months of taking the painkillers, Katie notices that they don't work as well or last as long. She begins taking more pills than prescribed.

1 in 4 teens reports having abused or misused an Rx drug at least once in their lifetime.

3



Katie quickly runs out of her Rx - and feels like she needs it. She begins stealing pills from a friend's medicine cabinet. She learns that crushing and snorting the pills can help her feel better, faster.

2/3 of teens who abuse Rx pain relievers say that they got them from family or friends.

4



Katie's parents notice that she is behaving strangely - and that she has a new set of friends. When they find a baggie of loose pills in her room, they become concerned and confront her. Katie denies that she has a problem.

95% of parents believe their child has never taken a prescription drug for a reason other than its intended use.

5



Katie asks her doctor for more painkillers, but he refuses. She can't find enough pills and begins to suffer from withdrawal. Her friend Jacob says he has heroin (also an opioid), but no painkillers. Katie never thought she would use heroin, but feels desperate to stop the horrible withdrawal symptoms. She starts snorting heroin.

4 out of 5 heroin users began first with recreational use of Rx pain relievers.

6



Katie's tolerance is very high and she cannot afford the amount she needs to keep away the powerful cravings. Jacob says she can use less heroin if she injects it. She is afraid of needles, but Jacob offers to inject the heroin for her. She agrees. After a few hours, Jacob notices that Katie is breathing very slowly and is turning blue. He calls 911 and leaves her.

Nearly 1/2 of young people who inject heroin start by abusing Rx drugs.

7



The paramedics find Katie and administer Naloxone, which reverses the effects of the heroin overdose. Katie is watched closely at the hospital. Soon after, her parents enroll her in an adolescent recovery program, which in this case, includes medication-assisted treatment, counseling and support.

Medication-assisted treatment is the use of medication, therapy and support to address withdrawal, cravings and relapse prevention.

8



Post-treatment, Katie's family is committed to continuing her care to keep her healthy.

Most people who get into and remain in treatment stop using drugs.

9



Katie is in recovery and working hard to stay sober.

With ongoing recovery support, it is possible to lead a healthy, productive life after addiction.

Is there a teenager in your life on a path similar to Katie's? Find help and resources at drugfree.org.

 Partnership[™]
for Drug-Free Kids
Where families find answers

 THE MEDICINE
ABUSE
PROJECT

Parents can also call our toll-free helpline: 1-855-DRUGFREE (1-855-378-4373)

What are Opioids?

Opioids include illegal drugs such as heroin, as well as prescription medications used to treat pain such as morphine, codeine, methadone, oxycodone (OxyContin, Percodan, Percocet), hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, Norco), fentanyl (Duragesic, Fentora), hydromorphone (Dilaudid, Exalgo), and buprenorphine (Subutex, Suboxone).

Opioids work by binding to specific receptors in the brain, spinal cord, and gastrointestinal tract. In doing so, they minimize the body's perception of pain. However, stimulating the opioid receptors or "reward centers" in the brain also can trigger other systems of the body, such as those responsible for regulating mood, breathing and blood pressure.

Overdose

A variety of effects can occur after a person takes opioids, ranging from pleasure to nausea, vomiting, severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) and overdose, in which breathing and heartbeat slow or even stop.

Opioid overdose can occur when a patient deliberately misuses a prescription opioid or an illicit drug such as heroin.

It also can occur when a patient takes an opioid as directed, but the prescriber miscalculated the opioid dose, or an error was made by the dispensing pharmacist or the patient misunderstood the directions for use.

Monitor



- Know of all the medications in your home and where they are stored.
- Always know how many pills are in each prescription bottle.
- Know what the pills are for.
- Use the back page of this booklet to keep inventory.
- Keep track of your refills.
- Needing to get refills more often that you should is a red flag.
- Pay especially close attention to medications that are commonly abused (stimulants, sedatives and tranquilizers.) Ask your doctor or pharmacist if your medicines fit into these categories.

Safeguard Your Home

Monitor → Be aware of all medications in your home.

Secure → Keep all medications secure.

Dispose → Properly dispose of all medications.

Secure



- Two-thirds of teens who report abuse of prescription medicines are getting them from friends, family and acquaintances. Make sure the teens in your life don't have access to your medication. Find out how to monitor, secure and properly dispose of unused and expired prescription and over-the-counter cough medicine in your home.
- Approach securing your prescriptions the same way you would other valuables in your home, like jewelry or cash. There's no shame in helping protect those items and the same holds true for your medicine.
- Take prescription medicine out of the medicine cabinet and secure them in a place only you know about.
- If possible, keep all medicine, both prescription and over-the-counter, in a safe place, such as locked cabinet your teen cannot access.
- Tell relatives, friends, neighbors, and especially grandparents to lock up their medicines or keep them in a safe place.
- Talk to the parents of your teenager's friends. Encourage them to secure their prescriptions as well.
- Keep prescription medicine in a secure place, count and monitor the number of pills you have and lock them up – and ask your friends and family members to do the same.

In Home Disposal



Step 1

Pour medication into a sealable plastic bag. If the medication is in solid form (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), add water to dissolve it.

Step 2

Add kitty litter, sawdust, coffee grounds or another mixing material to the plastic bag to make the solution less appealing for pets and children.

Step 3

Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash.

Step 4

Remove and destroy all identifying personal information (for example, the prescription label) from the medication containers before recycling them or throwing them away to ensure medical privacy.

Do's

DO ask your community pharmacist if any of the medicine you have been prescribed may have the potential for abuse.

DO lock up medicine that is at risk for being abused in a cabinet, drawer, or medicine safe.

DO keep medicine in a cool, dry place that is out of the reach of children.

DO store medicine in its original container – the label on the bottle provides important information about the medicine.

DO keep an updated list of all prescription medicine in your home. Take an inventory at least twice a year – when clocks 'spring' forward in the spring and 'fall' back in autumn, for example.

(Meds, 2016)



Dont's

DO NOT leave medicine in places that are easily accessible to children or pets.

DO NOT store medicine in a bathroom medicine cabinet where humidity and temperature changes can cause damage.

DO NOT share prescription medicine. Healthcare professionals prescribe specific medicine for individuals based on personal medical histories and other health factors. Medicine that works for one person may cause harm – even death – to someone else, even if symptoms are similar.

DO NOT take medicine in front of children who often mimic adults.

DO NOT flush down the toilet or put down the sink.

(Meds, 2016)



Disposal Locations

FOOTHILLS AREA COMMAND • 12800 Lomas NE • (505) 332-5240

NORTHEAST AREA COMMAND • 8201 Osuna NE • (505) 823-4455

SOUTHEAST AREA COMMAND • 800 Louisiana SE • (505) 256-2050

VALLEY AREA COMMAND • 5408 2nd Street NW • (505) 761-8800

SOUTHWEST AREA COMMAND • 6404 Los Volcanes NW • (505) 831-4705

A Few Things You Should Know

- The following information is for private homes that are NOT using a home health care agency. Home health care providers are required to dispose of medical waste according to the New Mexico Administrative Code.
- Only pills will be accepted- Doctor prescribed and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbal supplements, and pet medications.
- Proper disposal protects children and pets from accidental poisonings as well as teenagers and adults from misusing and abusing medications.
- Remove all medications from their original containers including pills in foil and place them in a sealable bag.
- Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

What's Not Accepted

- Liquids, injectable or syringes.
- Chemo or medical waste.
- Inhalers or other personal care items.

Help

- **Agora Crisis Center** (505) 277-3013
- **Albuquerque Metro Central Intake** (505) 272-9033
- **Bernalillo County Department of Substance Abuse Programs** (505) 468-1550
bernco.gov/substance-abuse-programs/
- **Poison Control** 1-800-222-1222



Resources

- **Bernalillo County Behavioral Health Initiative**
<http://www.bernco.gov/Public-Safety/behavioral-health.aspx>
- **Meds 16**
<http://www.safeguardmymeds.org/how-to-safeguard-your-prescription-meds/>
- **New Mexico Department Of Health**
<https://nmhealth.org/about/erd/ibeb/pos/>
- **New Mexico Risk & Resiliency Survey**
<http://www.youthrisk.org/>
- **Partnership for Drug Free Kids**
<http://www.drugfree.org/>