

What Can Parents Do?

1. Teach your children how to take their medicines as prescribed.
2. Tell your children not to share medicines.
3. Keep track of your children's pills.
4. Be present at teens' parties. It is hard to buy, sell, and take pills when parents are around.
5. Talk to your teens about not using pills just to study or lose weight.
6. Make sure you and your doctor know all the pills your children take.
7. If you think your children are taking medicines in the wrong way, talk to them and call your doctor.

You should not use this information in place of your doctor's care and advice.

To learn more about ADHD medicines, talk to your doctor or visit www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/adhd/treatment.shtml

ADHD Medicine Abuse



What Parents Need to Know

Have you heard that some teens abuse medicines for ADHD?

Well, it seems to be true! We see more reports of teens misusing medicines for ADHD — Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

This guide tells you about why people might misuse ADHD medicines and why this is dangerous. It also tells you how you can help **prevent your teens** from misusing them.

First, you should know more about ADHD and ADHD medicines:

As many as 8 out of 100 children between 5 and 18 years old have ADHD. Doctors and psychologists have tools that help them diagnose ADHD. Medicines can be a safe and helpful part of treatment. Some ADHD medicines are Adderall, Concerta, Dextroamphetamine, Focalin, Metadate, and Ritalin.

These medicines could cause problems if they are used the wrong way. This seems to happen more and more. In fact, when they were asked, **almost 1 out of 10 teens over age 12** reported taking medicines — including ADHD medicines — the wrong way.

Some teens use their own medicines the wrong way. Other teens take these medicines even though they do not have prescriptions for them! **This can be dangerous to their health.**

How are teens getting ADHD medicines?

Teens are getting these medicines in many ways. They might...

- Share them with their friends
- Buy from and sell to each other
- Take them from a family member who has a prescription
- Fake symptoms to get them from doctors

Why do teens abuse ADHD medicines?

ADHD medicines come in two forms, shorter-acting and longer-acting.

Teens think these medicines will help them...

- Get high
- Feel more energy
- Party
- Stay awake
- Control their weight
- Cram for school work or exams
- Get better grades “like magic”

One way teens try to get a “buzz” from the shorter-acting pills is by crushing them and snorting them. The longer-acting pills won’t provide this extra energy.

What does abuse of ADHD medicines do to teens?

Teens might feel ...

- Jittery
- Cranky
- Moody
- Nervous

They can also have ...

- Fast heart beat
- Sleep problems
- Headache
- Trouble getting along with others

Teens who start misusing these pills may feel they need to keep taking them.

In rare cases, sniffing these medicines or taking much more than the doctor ordered can lead to very serious heart problems.

Also, most people don’t know it, but it is against the law to have or use ADHD medicine without a prescription.

