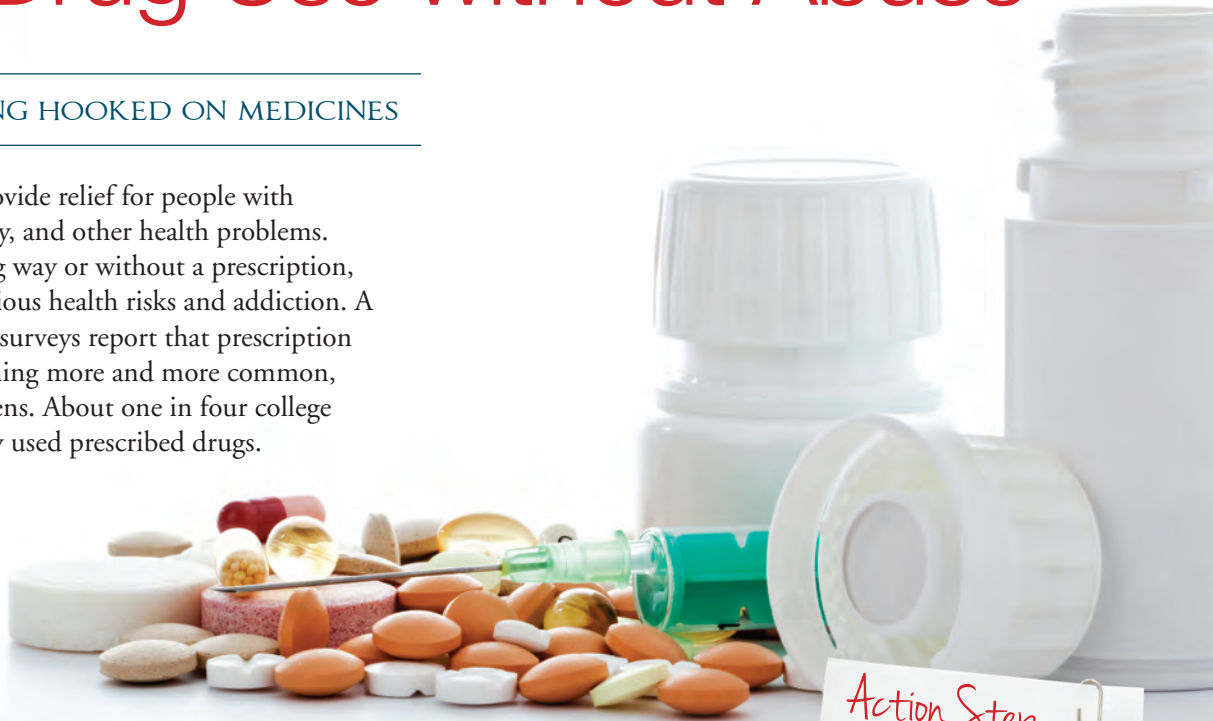




# Drug Use without Abuse

## AVOID GETTING HOOKED ON MEDICINES

Prescribed drugs provide relief for people with chronic pain, anxiety, and other health problems. But taken the wrong way or without a prescription, these drugs pose serious health risks and addiction. A number of national surveys report that prescription drug abuse is becoming more and more common, especially among teens. About one in four college students has illegally used prescribed drugs.



## COMMONLY ABUSED PRESCRIBED DRUGS

- **Painkillers or opioids** manage severe pain, but can cause physical dependence when used over long periods of time. Withdrawal symptoms occur when the use is stopped abruptly. Overuse, misuse, and use with other opioids can slow breathing and be fatal.
- **Sleeping pills and tranquilizers.** These slow normal brain function and are prescribed to promote sleep and treat anxiety and panic attacks. Overuse and taking them with pain medicine, over-the-counter (OTC) cold and allergy drugs, or alcohol, slow heart rhythm and breathing and can be fatal.
- **Stimulants.** These medicines increase alertness, attention, and energy. They are prescribed to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and obesity. A common abuse is taking Ritalin® to stay up all night to study. Signs of abuse include chest pain, stomachaches, and feelings of fear and anger. Seizures, irregular heartbeats, and death can also occur.

**Action Step**  
Studies show that most prescription abusers get their drugs off the streets or in the cabinets of friends and family. Keep your loved ones safe. Store your medications out of the reach of children and anyone who might be tempted to take them.

## SAFETY TIPS

- Let your doctor know about all prescribed and OTC medications you take. Include vitamins and herbal products.
- Ask your doctor about the risk of addiction when he or she prescribes sleeping pills, strong painkillers, etc. Find out how long you should take these medicines. Ask if there are ways to help treat your problem without them.
- Take your medicines as prescribed. Find out how much alcohol, if any, can be taken with your prescribed medicines.
- Follow the guidelines that your pharmacist provides with every prescription.
- Do not take another person's prescribed medicines.
- Do not share your medicines with others.