



Taking ACTION to prevent & address PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE



EDUCATE *before*
YOU MEDICATE
The NCPIE
Coalition-working
together to promote
safe medicine use
National Council on Patient Information and Education
www.talkaboutrx.org



A Resource Kit for America's College Campuses

5 Things You Can Do on Campus

*Raising awareness about the risks of prescription drug abuse doesn't have to take a lot of time. Here are **five** fast and easy ways you can make a difference.*

- 1. Talk it out.** Look for any opportunity to talk about prescription drug abuse with your peers. Many students who misuse prescription medications do so because they mistakenly believe they are safe and legal. Even a short discussion about the serious risks may make them think twice about misusing these drugs in the future.

Popular media is rich with references to prescription drug abuse (often celebrity overdose deaths), so keep your eye out for news stories, magazine articles, movies and music that you can use as a jumping off point for a casual conversation about the risks/dangers of prescription drug abuse. If you're unsure or hear something sketchy about prescription drug abuse, do your own research using reputable websites like www.talkaboutrx.org, www.medlineplus.com, or www.webmd.com and steer clear of sites like Wikipedia and other sites that might have misinformation. See [Helpful Resources and Tools](#) in the college resource kit for more information.

- 2. Mind your meds.** Even if you trust your friends and roommates, residence halls and sorority and fraternity houses are busy places and it's hard to keep track of who is coming and going. Some people are looking to find and steal prescription drugs, so treat them as you would your laptop, bike or other valuable personal property.

“It's never fun to break a friend's trust, but when their health and safety are at stake, it's the right thing to do.”

If you have a prescription for a commonly misused medication (for example, stimulants, depressants, pain killers) consider keeping it in a place that only you know about. It's probably a good idea to lock up any medications in a cool, dry place in your dorm room or apartment. If you do choose to store it in a common area, count the pills frequently to check for missing medicine. Always make sure you properly dispose of old or unused medicines. Not sure how? Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website, “For Consumers: How to Dispose of Unused Medicines,” at <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm> and **RX Safe Disposal** at <http://www.smarxtdisposal.net>.

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3. Pay attention. Get to know the signs of prescription drug abuse and take notice of what's going on around you, particularly during midterms, final exams and other periods of high stress. If you suspect that a friend or fellow student is misusing prescription medications, let them know you are concerned and offer to get them help.

If you don't feel comfortable addressing the problem directly, talk with trusted campus leader like a peer health educator, resident advisor or a member of your campus health services. They can help you figure out how to address the problem while keeping your conversation confidential. It's never fun to break a friend's trust, but when their health and safety are at stake, **it's the right thing to do.**

- 4. Show your support.** Many college social and athletic clubs have substance abuse policies. Show your support by joining drug-free organizations and attending substance-free events on campus. If a club you're interested in doesn't have a drug policy, encourage them to adopt one that includes banning the non-medical use of prescription drugs.
- 5. Use social networks.** Spend a few minutes posting brief messages about the dangers of prescription drug abuse to your social networks (Twitter, Facebook, etc). Provide tips for studying, relaxing and staying healthy while dealing with the demands of college life. Be sure to include links to helpful tools and resources. For additional information on this topic, see [Tips for Raising Awareness about Prescription Drug Abuse on Campus](#), [How to Create a Facebook Page](#) and [Tips for Promoting Responsible Medicine Use Online](#). For more information about prescription medications and ways to make a difference on campus, visit www.talkaboutrx.org.