

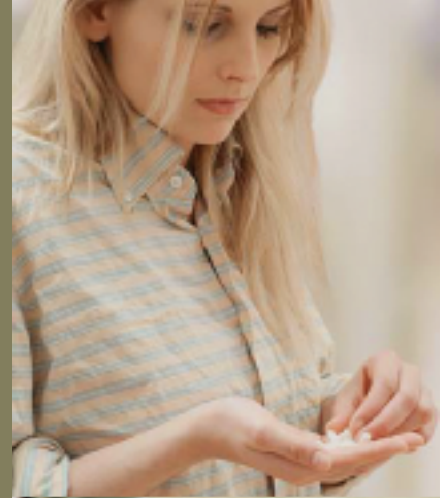
THE EPIDEMIC IS REAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE IN PINELLAS COUNTY

THE RESULTS ARE TRAGIC

A total of 249 people died in 2010 in Pinellas County
as a result of the accidental overdose of prescription drugs ...

31 more deaths than in 2009.*

*Source: Pinellas County Medical Examiner



PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Thousands experiment with prescription drugs every day in Pinellas County, often with tragic results.

The epidemic of prescription drug abuse has spread to families from every economic level. Many of the abusers are teens, who take easily accessible prescription medications from home. They recklessly mix them with other prescription drugs, illegal substances and alcohol.



AT HOME

Most parents, grandparents and other caretakers wouldn't dream of giving their children drugs. And yet that is just what they are doing when they fill their medicine cabinets, purses and countertops with prescription medication – drugs that are within easy reach. These drugs can be recklessly used, shared with friends, mixed and abused – with other drugs and with alcohol.

ON THE STREET

Pills are often purchased from dealers, the same way that “conventional” drugs are sold.

IN THE CLINICS

Prescriptions are freely written at fraudulent pain management clinics, known as “pill mills.” All clinics in Pinellas County are now mandated to obtain permits to certify that they are licensed to dispense prescriptions and are credible pain management clinics.

A task force is researching the problem in Pinellas County and until recommendations are made by this group, a moratorium on any new clinics is in place.

PINELLAS COUNTY IS FIGHTING BACK

ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Speak to your children about all types of drug abuse. As a parent, the things you say and do have a tremendous influence on the decisions your child makes – especially when it comes to using drugs. Speak to your children's friends about drug abuse and the abuse of prescribed drugs.

Monitor your prescriptions. Keep your prescription drugs to yourself. Hide them from your teens. This is not a matter of trust, but of monitoring the actions of your children and keeping them safe.

If a doctor prescribes pain medication, follow the directions carefully. Consider alternatives to pain medicines. Ask your doctor.

Ensure that the pain management clinic you attend has a permit to operate that was issued by Pinellas County. Ask your primary care physician for recommendations on pain management.

Report any illegal drug activity you suspect by calling (877) 792-2873 (RXABUSE). If you, your child or anyone you know has a problem, get help!

WHAT TEENS NEED TO KNOW

Prescriptions are not medicine unless prescribed to an individual, taken as prescribed and used only under the care of a doctor. Otherwise, these are DRUGS and are NOT SAFE. The danger of becoming dependent on prescription drugs is REAL.

Don't misuse "medicine" in your home. Taking drugs that are not prescribed for you or giving them to friends is illegal.

Mixing prescription drugs with other drugs or alcohol can have dire consequences. They affect brain function and can make you sick or even kill.

Pain management drugs are commonly prescribed and easily obtained – they are also extremely addictive. There is a national epidemic of prescription drug abuse, but the historically lax medical regulation in Florida has made it an even bigger problem in this state.

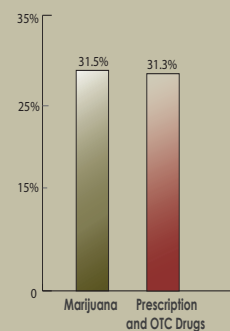
Painkillers are the most abused prescription drugs.

AS A PARENT

The things you say and do have a tremendous influence on the decisions your child makes – especially when it comes to **prescription drug abuse**.

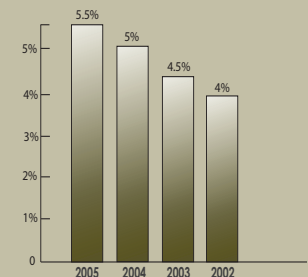
Research shows that kids who learn a lot about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to start the abuse.

DRUGS MOST FREQUENTLY USED BY 12TH GRADERS*



By talking to your kids about prescription drugs, you can help them make better choices, live safer, healthier lives.

OXYCONTIN & 12TH GRADERS
Percentage reported abusing OxyContin



* Source: National Institute of Drug Abuse, University of Michigan, Monitoring the Future survey, 2006

TAKING AIM AT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

TEENS admitted to treatment facilities for addiction to prescription pain relievers

increased by 300%

since the mid 1990s.¹

3.1 million

12-to-25-year-olds used over-the-counter cough and cold medications at least once to get high.²

Emergency room visits involving abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs

increased 21% from 2004 to 2005.

Nearly half of the patients were under the age of 20.³

1, 3. Office of National Drug Control Policy, Teens and Prescription Drugs, February 2007

2. Office of National Drug Control Policy, Prescription for Danger, January 2008



WHAT PINELLAS COUNTY IS DOING TO FIGHT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE:

Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners

Pinellas County commissioners enacted a moratorium on the opening of any new pain management clinics until they can be fully researched and recommendations studied. The ordinance requires all existing clinics to obtain permitting, which includes proof of licensing. The Department of Justice and Consumer Services sponsored the ordinance. It is the regulatory agency that oversees permitting of pain management clinics, supports law enforcement efforts and conducts public outreach. www.pinellascounty.org

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office

The Countywide Diversion Task Force is working with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to arrest dealers, close pill mills and stop prescription fraud. The Sheriff's Office operates Operation Medicine Cabinet, a program that was started to offer the public a way to safely dispose of unused prescription medicines. www.pcsoweb.com

To report the illegal sale or distribution of prescription drugs call Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (877) 792-2873 (RXABUSE)

NOPE, Pinellas Chapter

Narcotic Overdose Prevention and Education Task Force, Pinellas County chapter. Headed up by parents who lost children to unintentional drug overdose, members bring their stark message to schools and community groups. They also organize public events to heighten awareness and support family and friends who have lost loved ones to drug abuse. www.nopetaskforce.org/chapter_pinellas.asp

NOPE, National

www.nopetaskforce.org



LiveFree!

Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Pinellas County www.pinellascoalition.com

Office of National Drug Control Policy

1 (800) 788-2800 www.theantidrug.com

Lock Your Meds

National multi-media campaign, with support materials for outreach. www.lockyourmeds.org



Pinellas County Health Department

www.pinellashealth.com

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares Inc.

to locate or offer help. www.211tampabay.org

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