

## What You Should Know About...



# Prescription Drug Misuse among College Students

## PREVALENCE

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- ▶ According to a 2015 federal report, on an average day, 559 full-time college students start the non-medical use of prescription pain relievers, and 415 full-time college students use licit or illicit stimulants non-medically.
- ▶ According to the fall 2016 National College Health Assessment, nearly 12 percent of college students reported using one or more types of prescription drugs (including antidepressants, sedatives, and stimulants) that were not prescribed to them within the last 12 months.
- ▶ College students have a higher likelihood of misusing prescription stimulants, often referred to as “study drugs,” when compared to their non-college peers.
- ▶ Some students begin using prescription stimulants in the belief it may benefit their academic performance, but the non-medical use of stimulants has not been proven to do so.

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Sources: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *A Day in the Life of College Students Aged 18 to 22: Substance Use Facts* (May 26, 2016); American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (Fall 2016)

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## CONSEQUENCES

► Negative outcomes of prescription drug misuse among college students include:

- ✗ Missing class
- ✗ Lower grade point average
- ✗ Psychosis, hallucinations, paranoia
- ✗ Increased risk for cardiac effects
- ✗ Loss of coordination
- ✗ Addiction

## Things You Can Do to Prevent Prescription Drug Misuse

► Work with physicians and law enforcement personnel to inform students about the physical, academic, and legal risks and consequences of prescription drug misuse.

► Get educated:

→ Parents – be able to talk knowledgeably about prescription drugs with your children

→ Faculty members and staff – be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of prescription drug misuse, and know the available on- and off-campus resources to refer someone for help

→ Students – learn the facts and talk to your parents or another trusted adult (e.g., professor, coach, friend) about concerns you have about prescription drugs

► Don't share your prescription drugs – they were prescribed to you, not someone else.

► Dispose of unused or expired medications properly.

For more information, go to:

<https://go.usa.gov/x5E7j>

► Get involved - join your campus's or local community's drug abuse prevention coalition.

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## RESOURCES

[www.campusdrugprevention.gov](http://www.campusdrugprevention.gov)

Marijuana Use and Prescription Drug Misuse among College Students: <https://go.usa.gov/x5Mup>