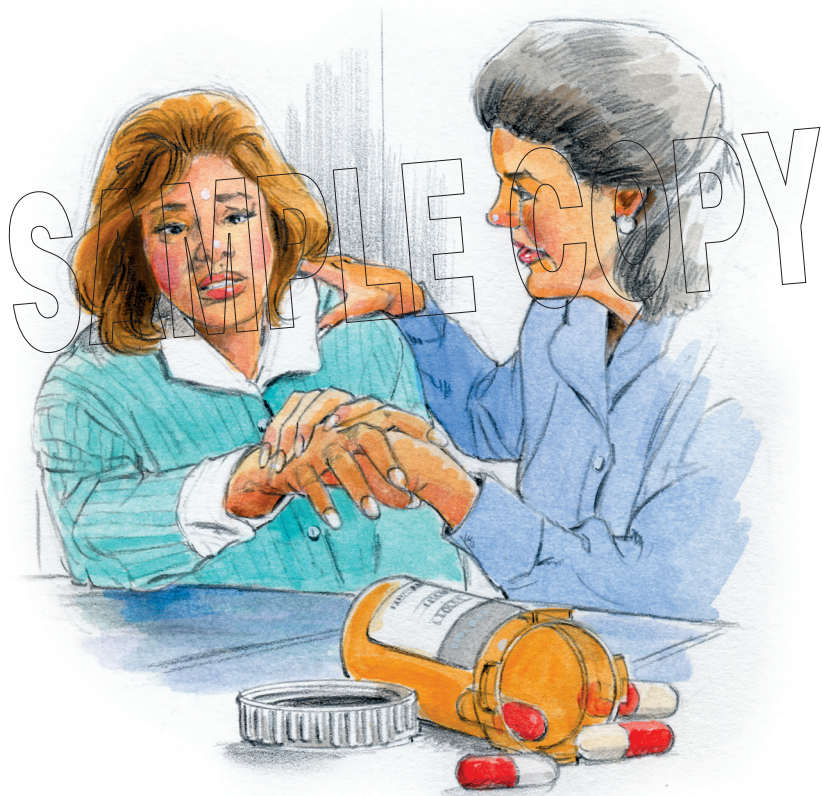


# Prescription Drugs

More Dangerous Than You Know

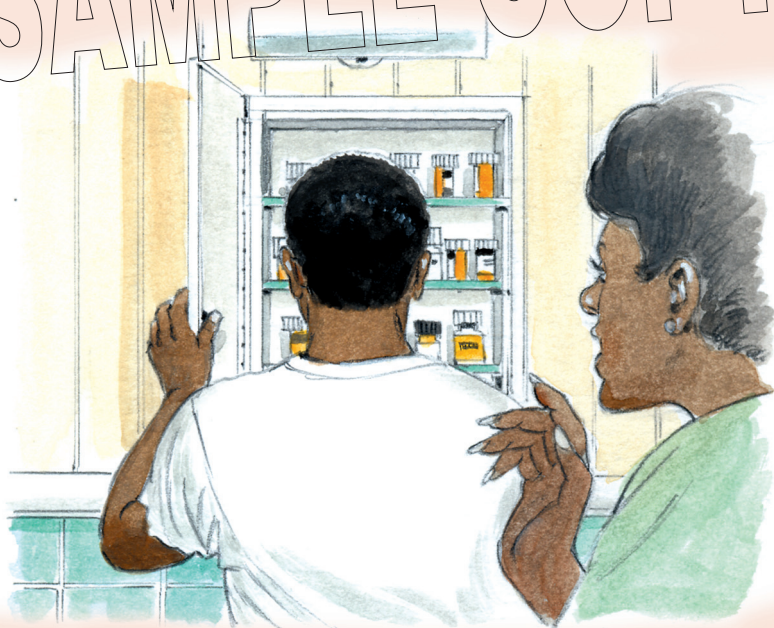


Guides for Good Living

# Sick people need medicine. But medicine can be bad for people who are not sick.

A prescription is a note from a doctor. Prescriptions tell people how much medicine they should take and how often they should take it.

Some people use prescription medicine when they are not sick. Abusing medicine in this way can hurt a person. **Abusing prescription medicine puts thousands of people in the hospital every year.**



# Types of Medicine

Prescription medicine usually comes as a pill or tablet. Types of medicines that are abused include:

- **Stimulants**

Stimulants give a person more energy. They are used to treat many physical and mental illnesses. Dexedrine and Ritalin are examples of stimulants.

- **Depressants**

Depressants slow a person down and help them sleep. Some examples of depressants are Valium, Nembutal, and Xanax.

- **Opioids**

Opioids are given to people who are in serious pain. Vicodin, Darvon, and Oxycontin are examples of opioids.

It is against the law to use prescription medication without the help of a doctor.

**Prescription medicine hurts a person in many ways. Taking too much affects every part of the body and mind.**

- Someone's heart rate may be too fast or too slow.
- A person may have trouble sleeping or sleep too much.
- They may get fevers or headaches.
- They may not want to eat and lose too much weight.
- They may get angry or sad for no reason.
- They may feel nervous or think people are out to get them.



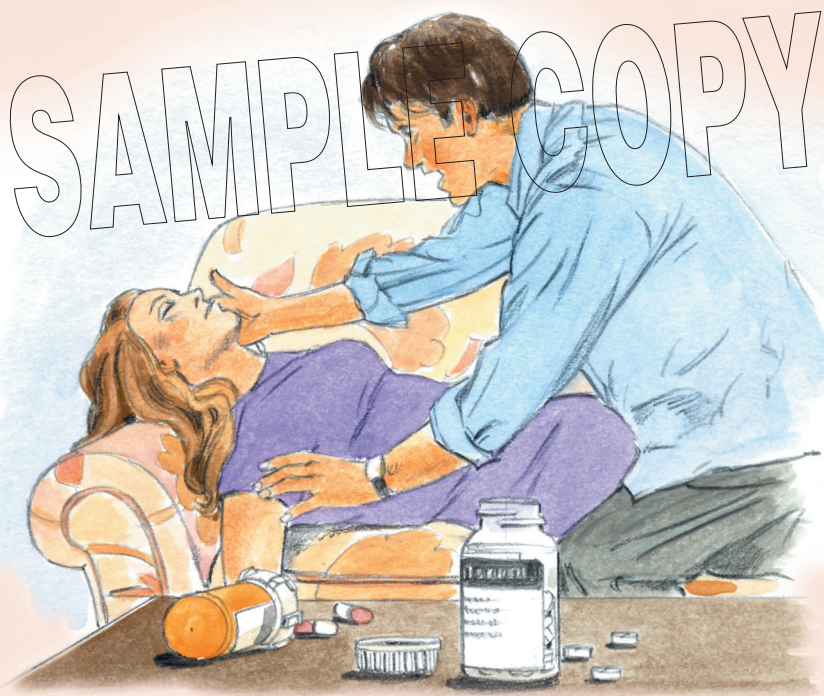
**Some prescription drug abusers lose touch with reality.**



# Prescription medicine abuse can kill.

People who abuse prescription drugs may get diseases in their liver or pancreas. They may have heart attacks or strokes. Abusing medicines may also lead to brain damage.

**Taking too much prescription medicine can cause death.** This is called an overdose.



# What is addiction?

Prescription medicine abuse may lead to addiction. This means users cannot stop taking the drug. Their body gets used to the drug and wants more and more.

Taking too much medicine also leads to tolerance. Tolerance means a user must take a larger amount of medicine to feel the same effects.

People who try to stop abusing prescription medicine go through withdrawal. **Withdrawal is painful because the body is used to having the drug.** Prescription medicine withdrawal can cause:

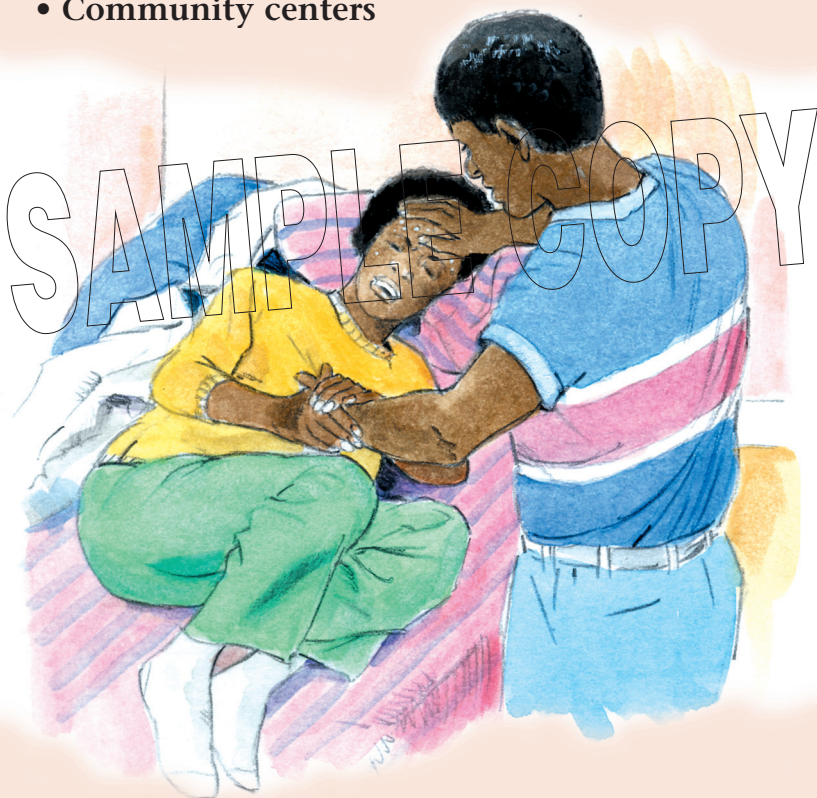
- Sleeplessness
- Nightmares
- Heavy sweating or chills
- Flu-like feelings
- Stomach cramps and nausea
- Feeling sad for no reason
- Getting angry or violent for no reason

Four million people use prescription drugs even though they are not sick.

# Getting Help

People who want to quit abusing prescription medication can get help through treatment programs. Some places to find these programs are:

- Hospitals
- Public health clinics
- Church groups
- Community centers



**Know the facts. Know the risks.  
Don't abuse prescription medicine.**

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