

# Prescription Medication Misuse: Prevention, Recognition, Resources



7 Floridians die every day from prescription medication abuse – 5 times as many deaths as from all illegal drugs.

In 2008, more Floridians died from medication poisoning than from car crashes.

## Take Steps to Prevent Medication Misuse

1. Take medications with care: follow directions, have your pharmacist check for interactions between prescription, herbal and over-the-counter medicine.
2. Put medicines in a place where children and visitors can't get them.
3. Don't share medicines with others. It could cause illness and is against the law.
4. Dispose of unneeded medications:
  - a. Remove labels from pill containers
  - b. Mix pills with liquid to dissolve them
  - c. Stir in with coffee grounds, dirt or kitty litter
  - d. Seal container with tape and hide in an outdoor garbage can
  - e. Contact law enforcement agencies to find out about local drug take-back events

## Warning Signs that Someone is Abusing Medications:

- Unexplained need for money. May borrow or steal to get it
- Drop in attendance and performance at work
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors
- Appears fearful, anxious or paranoid with no reason
- Lack of motivation; appears lethargic or 'spaced out'
- Periods of unusual activity or extreme sleepiness
- Sudden mood swings, irritability or angry outbursts
- Unexplained change in personality or attitude
- Sudden change in friends, favorite hangouts and hobbies
- Frequently getting into trouble (fights, crashes, illegal activities)

**Florida Poison Information Center Network:**  
1-800-222-1222

[www.fpicn.org](http://www.fpicn.org)

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## What to do in an Emergency:

1. Signs of medication abuse vary depending on the type of medicine used.
  - a. Stimulants (diet pills, ADHD drugs, caffeine, etc.) can cause hyperactivity, agitation, twitching, irritability, lack of appetite, difficulty sleeping, restlessness, seizures, high blood pressure, fever, fast heartbeat and chest pressure
  - b. Depressants (muscle relaxants, pills for sleeping, pain relief or anxiety) can cause sleepiness, confusion, constipation, slow breathing, slow heartbeat, pinpoint pupils (black part of eyes get very small), noisy breathing (like snoring), vomiting, choking, weakness, coma and death
2. If a person has taken medications and you can't wake them up, call 911. Never let them sleep it off. They may not wake up. Start CPR if needed
3. If someone has taken medications and you're not sure what to do, call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. It's free, confidential and open 24/7
4. If someone needs help for medication addiction, call SAMHSA Help Line at 1-800-662-HELP

## For more Information:

<http://www.nida.nih.gov/PDF/RRPrescription.pdf>

[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/drug\\_substance\\_abuse\\_addiction\\_signs\\_effects\\_treatment.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/drug_substance_abuse_addiction_signs_effects_treatment.htm)

[http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/pdf/prescrip\\_disposal.pdf](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/pdf/prescrip_disposal.pdf)

<http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm101653.htm>

<http://www.flgov.com/drugcontrol/pdfs/20100813.pdf>



florida's poison centers  
Children's Medical Services



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