

GENERAL CONVERSATION STARTERS

Resolve to start the conversation about simple ways to prevent prescription drug abuse with your loved ones.

Here are some ideas to get started:

- **READ the instructions on your medications.** Whether it's a prescription drug or an over-the-counter (OTC) medication, you should always read and follow all of the instructions. Be sure to note the correct amount to take, and never exceed the prescribed or OTC maximum dose.
- **Use ONLY as directed.** Never take a medication for something other than for what it was prescribed.

Real life example: you have leftover pain medication from having your wisdom teeth removed, and you later hurt your back from heavy lifting. It is not OK to take the leftover painkillers from your wisdom teeth surgery to ease your back pain. You need to have your new injury evaluated by a doctor who can assess the best way to treat your pain.

- **Sharing is NOT caring with prescriptions.** When medication is prescribed for one person, many things are taken into account to ensure it is safe for that patient to take. These factors can include age, gender, weight, allergies, preexisting medical conditions, among others. It is not only illegal to share prescription drugs, but it also potentially puts the other person in great danger.
- **Medicines DON'T go in the medicine cabinet.** Safely storing your medications is extremely important. Keep them somewhere they won't be accidentally ingested by children or pets, or be easily found by someone who may have an addiction. You can also purchase a locking medicine cabinet or a locking medicine box.
- **Prescription drugs are NOT safe just because they're prescribed by a doctor.** A major misconception is that prescription drugs are not as dangerous as illicit drugs. When used correctly by a patient under the supervision of a doctor, prescription drugs are safe. However, when prescription medications are taken recreationally or by someone other than who they were prescribed for, they can be deadly.



PARENTS ARE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCES THAT TEENS NEED TO HEAR FROM ABOUT AVOIDING DRUGS. KIDS WHO LEARN A LOT ABOUT THE RISKS OF DRUGS AT HOME ARE AT LEAST 20 PERCENT LESS LIKELY TO USE DRUGS THAN THOSE WHO DO NOT HEAR THAT CRITICAL MESSAGE FROM THEIR PARENTS.

Source: *The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study: Teens & Parents*