



PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE EPIDEMIC | DRUG ADDICTION
HOUSTON

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PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE EPIDEMIC – DEATH IN A BOTTLE: PAINKILLERS KILL MORE THAN THE PAIN

PLAIN AND SIMPLE, THE FACTS ARE SCARY AND VERY, VERY SAD.

- While the use of many street drugs is on a slight decline in the US, abuse of prescription drugs continues to grow. In 2007, 2.5 million Americans abused prescription drugs for the first time, compared to 2.1 million who used marijuana for the first time.
- According to the [Center for Lawful Access and Abuse Deterrents](#), as of 2012, overdose deaths involving prescription opioids (which are medications used to treat pain), have increased to almost 17,000 deaths a year in the United States.
- It is stated on the website for [Foundation for a Drug-Free World](#), that every day in the US, 2,500 youth (ages 12 to 17) abuse a prescription pain reliever for the first time.
- By survey, almost 50% of teens believe that prescription drugs are much safer than illegal street drugs, AND 60% to 70% say that home medicine cabinets are their source of drugs.
- According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, teens who abuse prescription drugs are twice as likely to use alcohol, five times more likely to use marijuana, and twelve to twenty times more likely to use illegal street drugs such as heroin, Ecstasy and cocaine than teens who do not abuse prescription drugs.

The bottom line, painkillers are highly addictive, can lead to overdose, or lead to trying other harmful, illegal drugs.

SO WHAT EXACTLY ARE PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS?

Prescription painkillers are powerful medications that interfere with the nervous system's transmission of the nerve signals that we perceive as pain. Most painkillers also stimulate portions of the brain associated with pleasure. Therefore, in addition to blocking pain, they produce a short lived euphoric feeling, or a "high."

The most powerful prescription painkillers are called opioids, which are opium-like compounds. They are manufactured to react on the nervous system in the same way as drugs derived from the opium poppy, like heroin. The most commonly abused opioid painkillers include [oxycodone](#), hydrocodone, meperidine, hydromorphone and propoxyphene.

As exposure and tolerance builds to the drug, so does the dependence upon it, leading one to full-blown [addiction](#). Attempts to stop at that point, cause withdrawal symptoms which can be dangerous. Meanwhile, many addicts can function for some time without being aware of the toll it is taking on their bodies, and their loved ones are sometimes unaware that they have a problem. Addicts are very good at lying and hiding the truth so as to continue their use of the drug, and some may be wanting to avoid embarrassment once they've realized they've gotten themselves in too deep.

ADDICTED TO VICODIN

One mother of a young man named John mourns his death and shares his story in hopes of helping others recognize painkiller addiction before it is too late for themselves or someone they love.

At the age of 28, John died suddenly. He was living with her at the time, and one day woke her up as he was doubled over in pain. At the hospital, they diagnosed him with pancreatitis. But he didn't tell his doctors about his drug abuse. Three to four years prior, he was prescribed Vicodin for an injury he sustained at work. Over a short time, he became addicted, and continued using Vicodin long after the injury was healed.

When his mom went home to get some things to bring back to him at the hospital, she found his "Drug Schedule" in his room, along with hundreds of empty pill baggies that he had stashed around. It turns out that he had been taking 30-40 pills a day. A short while

after he was admitted to the hospital, he went into cardiac arrest, and could not be revived. John's autopsy report stated he was "a dead man walking". The massive amount of Acetaminophen in the Vicodin he was taking damaged every single one of his vital organs.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE EPIDEMIC

Prescription drug addiction is not only serious, the story above proves that it is also deadly. If you pay attention, you can hear news almost daily about someone who is ill or has died from an overdose or from the devastating effects it has had on their body.

The first step in preventing addiction is to avoid it. But if you or a loved one use prescription drugs and suspect that you are addicted, or headed that way, you need to ask for help. John's mom found out at his funeral that he was too embarrassed to let her in on his secret and ask for help. Now she is living with the grief of the loss of her son, and with the guilt that she didn't know he had a problem until it was too late.

Don't become a statistic. Be honest with yourself. Be honest with your doctors, and loved ones you can trust. If you suspect you have a problem, find a professional right away who can address your questions and provide answers.

[MOFFITT WELLNESS RETREAT](#) CAN TAKE YOUR CALL 1.713.907.5632. OUR TRAINED COUNSELORS CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE. OR, PLEASE CONNECT WITH US FOR A [FREE CONSULTATION](#).

2015

A Helpful Guide to Alcohol & Drug Evaluation

The purpose of this Guide is to be a reliable resource
and provide answers to those who may be concerned
that they, or someone they love, have a problem with
alcohol or drug use.

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FREE:

Drug & Alcohol Evaluation Guide