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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

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Know! What To Say About Rx Drug Abuse

"10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. 11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death." Acts 13:10

In a recent past Know! Parent Tip, we discussed the skyrocketing number of preteens and teens abusing prescription medications; Every day, about 2,500 American youth try their first pain pill (for a high). We also identified some general thoughts that reportedly cross young peoples' minds when considering taking that first pill.

In this Parent Tip we take a closer look at the reasons youth give for experimentation and provide you with accurate information on medication abuse so that you can more easily frame the conversation to dispel the myths and decrease your child's risk.

As with any persuasive conversation, it is important to discuss the topic openly and keep the mood relaxed, so that your child does not feel defensive or afraid to share his/her feelings.

You may also want to keep in mind this four-part formula to successful persuasion (PRIME for Life):

1. State the view you want to change.
2. Validate the reasonableness of the view.
3. Gently challenge with new information.
4. Replace with the new view.

YOUTH: I have heard so much hype over these pain meds. I just want to try it once. It's not a big deal.

PARENT: With all the recent attention on pain meds, I can understand your curiosity. But it is important to know that even experimenting with these medications can bring about dangerous consequences. These pain meds (also known as opiates) can cause a number of short-term side effects like nausea, constipation, fatigue and confusion. Long-term use can lead to physical dependence and addiction on the drug. Once addicted, both the body and mind crave more of it...leading a person down a dark path. And if opiates are taken with alcohol, antihistamines (found in cold medicines) or other substances that slow the central nervous system, it can be a fatal situation, even with first use. So using medicines for a high is a big deal.

YOUTH: I know it's not "ok" to use drugs, but at least it's a medicine prescribed by a doctor, which is better than an illegal drug off the street.



Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



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PARENT: You're right on your first point, it's absolutely not ok to use drugs (make clear your stance). And I understand why you would think a medicine prescribed by doctors is safer than illegal street drugs. But the fact is legal does not equal safe (reference the short and long term side effects of Rx pain meds in the above scenario). Medicines have a system which controls who can get them and when. That system is there for a reason: to protect us.

YOUTH: This medicine helped my friend's mom with her back pain, so there is nothing wrong with borrowing a few pills to help with my ankle injury.

PARENT: While it may appear that your injury or the pain you are suffering is similar, there are many other things a doctor takes into consideration when prescribing a medication to an individual including: medical history, allergies and other side effects, a person's weight for appropriate dosage, interactions with other medicines being taken, etc. By borrowing or sharing a prescribed medication you are risking making the health condition gravely worse for yourself or someone else. Bottom line - this is when sharing is not a good thing.

YOUTH: If a small dose of my prescription helped me feel good, a little more will make me feel even better.

PARENT: Familiarize your child with the Point of Diminishing Returns. To put it in youth terms, try this analogy. "You are hungry, you eat one cheeseburger, you then feel satisfied. If you eat two cheeseburgers or even three cheeseburgers, will that make you feel even more satisfied? No - You are more likely to feel overstuffed and sick (because you've hit the point of diminishing returns). The same holds true for prescription medication. Your doctor prescribes just the right amount of a given medicine to help you achieve the greatest results. Go beyond that amount and the side effects can be dangerous and at times, even deadly. More is not always better.

There are many different scenarios that could be discussed. We encourage you to come up with more. The important thing is that you are talking. Because talking with children about the risks of prescription drug abuse can positively impact their attitudes and empower them to make healthy, substance-free lifestyle choices.

For resources and information on combating prescription drug abuse visit [The Generation Rx Initiative](#).

Sources: DrugFree.org, BusinessDictionary.com, Prevention Research Institute: PRIME for Life for Parents

Other Verses to Consider:

Acts 13:10

Visit starttalking.ohio.gov to get the conversation going !!!