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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.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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Know! The Signs of Prescription Drug Abuse

"23 Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses." 1 Timothy 5:23

In the last tip, Know! Prescription Pills Are Being Used To Gain Academic Edge, we talked about the rising number of youth abusing stimulant medications, otherwise known as "smart pills," for the purpose of improving test scores in the classroom. In this tip, we will talk about other prescription medications commonly abused by youth, as well as warning signs they may present.

While stimulant medications are being abused because they work to rev up the brain, sedative medications are being abused because they work to slow down the brain. Teens report using sedatives to relax, ease stress and aid in sleep. The prescription drug that's gained the most media attention due to celebrity use, addiction and overdose and now because of the epidemic number of adult abusers, is prescription pain medication – which is unfortunately also a popular drug of abuse among youth. Teens who abuse prescription pain medications typically do so for the sole purpose of getting high.

Parents: While it is vitally important to lock up and monitor all prescription and over-the counter medications, it is especially critical if your medicine cabinet contains stimulants, sedatives or pain medications – as these are the most common drugs teens seek.

According to the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE), general physical signs of prescription drugs such as these may include:

- Excessive sweating, urination or thirst
- Nausea and vomiting
- Uncontrollable diarrhea
- Spastic shaking
- Drowsiness, dizziness and insomnia
- Loss of consciousness
- Physical dependence
- Addiction
- Hospitalization

General behavioral signs of these prescription drugs may include (as reported by NCPIE):

- Sudden mood changes including irritability, negative attitude or general change in personality
- Extreme changes in groups of friends or hangout locations
- Lying or being deceitful
- Unaccounted time away from home or school
- Avoiding eye contact



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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- Losing interest in personal appearance, extracurricular activities or sports
- Poor performance at school
- Borrowing money or having extra cash
- Visiting and even purchasing from pro-drug abuse (illegal) web sites

In protecting our children from prescription drug abuse, it is imperative to be aware of the most common drugs of abuse, while at the same time taking precautions by locking up and monitoring all medications, including those sold over-the-counter. It is also essential to know the physical and behavioral red flags that signal something is wrong, and as a parent or caregiver, to then take those warning signs seriously and act on them immediately.

If you suspect your child is using prescription drugs, regardless of the reason, seek help without delay. Call 1-800-662-HELP or visit www.samhsa.gov/treatment for services and treatment locations near you.

Source: National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE): Maximizing Your Role as a Teen Influencer: What You Can Do To Help Prevent Teen Prescription Drug Abuse.

Other Verses to Consider:

Proverbs 31:4-9

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