

## Pharmaceutical Teens

**Herald News**  
**Living Well Section**  
**BOLD Coalition**  
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Did you know that the most commonly abused drugs may be found right in your own home? Teens are using prescription and over the counter drugs for recreation, and kids as young as 12 are experimenting. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Opioids such as OxyContin and Vicodin, as well as their generic cousin's oxycodone and hydrocodone, top the list. Others include valium and stimulants such as Ritalin, Dexedrine and Adderall. Over the counter medications like cough syrup and allergy medicines are abused as well.

(<http://alcoholism.about.com/od/prescription/a/aa040704.htm>)

Sometimes teens take them to sleep better, alleviate anxiety or to improve concentration as well as, to get "high". They view these drugs as "safer" than street drugs because they are manufactured by a reputable company. They're also easier to get than illicit drugs. Often found in their own home or that of friends and family. No need to find a dealer on the street. Strange as it may seem, some teens believe prescription drugs are not addictive and will not harm them.

What are some dangers? Addiction, many drugs are highly addictive and teens have a higher risk of dependency than adults. Death, Pharmaceuticals are controlled substances which can be lethal when used improperly, or mixed with other medication and/or alcohol.

What can you do?

- Lock up medications in a locked box made for storing prescription medication. Ask your local department or specialty store if they carry them.
- Safely discard your unused medication periodically and don't keep medications in plain view such as the medicine cabinet.
- Talk to your kids. Warn them of the dangers of taking prescription medication without a doctor's supervision and abusing over the counter medicines.
- Take advantage of everyday "teachable moments." Use everyday events in your life to point out things you'd like your child to know about.

Remember, you as parents are the first line of defense against drug abuse. By educating ourselves we are helping to make greater Fall River a safe place for our children to grow up. Together we all make a difference in our community.