

## Fact Sheet

# Prescription Opioid & Stimulant Misuse Among Youth

October, 2021 • Montana State University Extension Family & Consumer Sciences

### NATIONAL STATISTICS: PRESCRIPTION MISUSE AMONG 12 TO 17-YEAR-OLDS

- 35% report using prescriptions because they incorrectly believe prescriptions are “safer than illegal drugs.”
- 62% report abusing prescription drugs because they are easy to get from parents’ medicine cabinets.
- 57% of those who misused prescription opioids got them from a friend or relative.

### WHAT ARE OPIOIDS

**o·pi·oid** noun 1. an opiumlike compound that binds to one or more of the three opioid receptors of the body. adjective 1. relating to opioid compounds.

**Prescription opioids** can be prescribed by doctors to treat moderate to severe pain and are often prescribed after injuries or surgeries.

#### LIST OF COMMON PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS:

Codeine , Diphenoxylate (Lomotil), Fentanyl, Hydrocodone (Vicodin), Methadone, Morphine (Kadian, Avinza), Oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet), Oxymorphone (Opana). Slang Terms: Oxy, Percs, and Vics.

#### **Commonly Misused Prescription Opioids:**

**Morphine:** A natural opioid prescribed under many brand names, including Astramorph, Avinza, DepoDur, Duramorph, and Kaidan, among others.

**Oxycodone:** A semi-synthetic opioid prescribed under the brand names OxyContin and Percocet.

**Vicodin:** Takes hydrocodone, a semi-synthetic opioid, and pairs it with acetaminophen to make another highly addictive painkiller.

**Short-Term Side Effects:** pain relieve, feeling relaxed and happy. **Harmful Side Effects:** confusion, nausea, constipation, euphoria, slowed breathing, increase in pain, tolerance, and physical dependency. **Side Effects of Misuse:** slowed breathing can cause hypoxia, a condition that could result in coma, permanent brain damage, or death. Misuse can lead to Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).

### WHAT ARE STIMULANTS

**stim·u·lant** noun 1. a substance that raises levels of physiological or nervous activity in the body. adjective 1. raising levels of physiological or nervous activity in the body.

**Prescription stimulants** can be prescribed by doctors to treat Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD) and Narcolepsy— (uncontrollable episodes of deep sleep).

#### LIST OF COMMON PRESCRIPTION STIMULANTS:

Adderall, Ritalin, Dexedrine, and diet aids such as Preludin Fastin, and Meridia. Slang Terms: Speed, Uppers, Vitamin R.

#### **Commonly Misused Prescription Stimulants:**

**Adderall:** With a usage rate of 76% among stimulant abusers, Adderall is the most popular stimulant for self-medication. Prescribed as a treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), this cocktail of amphetamines’ primary illicit use is to be ground and snorted as a “study aid”.

**Ritalin:** Brand name for a stimulant (methylphenidate) used by 25% of people who misuse prescription stimulants. Intended for use as an ADHD treatment, Ritalin is used nonmedically as a study aid or to stay alert.

**Short-Term Side Effects:** increased blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing. Decreased blood flow, opened-up breathing passages, high temp., irregular heartbeat, heart failure, and seizures. **Side Effects of Misuse:** psychosis, anger or paranoia. Misuse can lead to Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

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### Misuse of prescription drugs means:

Taking a medication in a manner or dose other than prescribed; taking someone else's prescription, even if for a legitimate medical complaint such as pain; or taking a medication to feel euphoria (i.e. to get high). The term *nonmedical use of prescription drugs* also refers to these categories of misuse.

### Teens misuse prescription drugs for many reasons:

To feel good or get high—To relax or relieve tension—To reduce appetite—To increase alertness—To experiment with the mental effects of the substance—To be accepted by peers or to be social—To try to improve concentration or to stay awake—To try and improve academic or work performance.

### Signs of prescription drug misuse include:

Stealing, forging or selling prescriptions—Taking higher doses than prescribed—Excessive mood swings or hostility—Increase or decrease in sleep—Poor decision-making—Appearing to be high, unusually energetic, or sedated—Requesting early refills or continually “losing” prescriptions—Seeking prescriptions from more than one doctor.

**Prescription drug withdrawal** is the group of symptoms that occur upon the abrupt discontinuation or decrease in the intake of medicine. **Opioid withdrawal includes** muscle & bone pain, sleep problems, diarrhea & vomiting, cold flashes with goose bumps, uncontrollable leg movements. **Stimulant withdrawal includes** fatigue, depression, and sleep problems.

### Signs of prescription drug overdose:

A person can overdose on either prescription opioids and stimulants. An overdose occurs when the person uses enough of the drug to produce life-threatening reaction or death.

### Key Montana Stats & Resources

- One in ten high school students has taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription. (2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey) <https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/publichealth/documents/EMSTS/opioids/MontanaSubstanceUseDisordersTaskForceStrategicPlan.pdf>
- Statewide, 13% of high school students and 17% of students with disabilities took prescription pain medication (such as codeine, Vicodin, OxyContin, Hydrocodone and Percocet) without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it during their lifetime. (2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey) [https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/YRBS/2019YRBS/2019\\_MT\\_YRBS\\_FullReport.pdf](https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/YRBS/2019YRBS/2019_MT_YRBS_FullReport.pdf)
- In 2019, Montana providers wrote 48.2 opioid prescriptions for every 100 persons 18 and older. (Montana DPHHS Epidemiology report, 2019) <https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/publichealth/documents/Epidemiology/EpiOpioidUse2021.pdf>
- Approximately 38,600 Montanans aged 12 years and older misused opioids in 2018. (MTDPHHS, 2019) <https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/publichealth/documents/Epidemiology/EpiOpioidUse2021.pdf>
- Between 2007-2018, the number of drug poisoning deaths in Montana totaled 472. (MTDPHHS, 2019) <https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/publichealth/documents/EMSTS/opioids/DrugPoisoningDeathsMontana2007to2018.pdf>
- While opioid related deaths have declined since 2007, deaths related to stimulants have increased dramatically from 18 in 2013-2014 to 51 in 2017-2018. (MTDPHHS, 2019)

### Signs of an Opioid Overdose

- Slow, shallowed breathing (Hypoxia)
- Clammy skin
- Convulsions
- Respiratory depression & arrest (stop breathing)
- Coma
- Death

### Signs of a Stimulant Overdose

- Restlessness & Tremors
- Overactive reflexes
- Rapid breathing
- Confusion & Aggression
- Hallucinations & Panic states
- Abnormally increased fever
- Muscle pain & weakness
- Irregular heartbeat
- Seizures

This project is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. For more information please visit our website at [http://health.msuetension.org/opioid\\_misuse.html](http://health.msuetension.org/opioid_misuse.html)