







NIDA Home > Drugs of Abuse/Related Topics > Prescription Medications

# **Prescription Medications**

**Brief** 

Prescription drugs that are abused or used for **Description:** nonmedical reasons can alter brain activity and lead to dependence. Commonly abused classes of prescription drugs include opioids (often prescribed to treat pain), central nervous system depressants (often prescribed to treat anxiety and sleep disorders), and stimulants (prescribed to treat narcolepsy, ADHD, and obesity).

Street Names: Commonly used opioids include oxycodone (OxyContin), propoxyphene (Darvon), hydrocodone (Vicodin), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), meperidine (Demerol), and diphenoxylate (Lomotil). Common central nervous system depressants include barbiturates such as pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal), and benzodiazepines such as diazepam (Valium) and alprazolam (Xanax). Stimulants include dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine) and methylphenidate (Ritalin).

**Effects:** 

Long-term use of opioids or central nervous system depressants can lead to physical dependence and addiction. Taken in high doses, stimulants can lead to compulsive use, paranoia, dangerously high body temperatures, and irregular heartbeat.

**Statistics** 

In 2006, 16.2 million Americans age 12 and older had and Trends: taken a prescription pain reliever, tranquilizer, stimulant, or sedative for nonmedical purposes at least once in the year prior to being surveyed. Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health; http://www.samhsa.gov/. The NIDA-funded 2007 Monitoring the Future Study showed that 2.7% of 8th graders, 7.2% of 10th graders, and 9.6% of 12th graders had abused Vicodin and 1.8% of 8th graders, 3.9% of 10th graders, and 5.2% of 12th graders had abused OxyContin for nonmedical purposes at least once in the year prior to being surveyed. Source:

Monitoring the Future

http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/.



### See Also:

### Other Recommended Reading

- Drugs, Brains, and Behavior - The Science of Addiction
- Fentanyl Abuse Message from the NIDA Director
- Fentanyl
- Increased Abuse of Prescription Drugs is Cause for Concern -Message from the NIDA Director
- Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents: A Research-Based Guide for Parents, Educators, & Community Leaders, 2nd edition
- NIDA InfoFacts: High School and Youth Trends
- NIDA InfoFacts: Hospital Visits (Trends and Statistics)
- NIDA InfoFacts: Nationwide Trends

#### NIDA's Publication Series

Research Reports

### **NIDA's Featured Publications**



NIDA InfoFacts: Prescription Drugs and Pain Medications. Describes the health effects of abusing prescription drugs. For a general audience. (Report). En Español



NIDA Research Report: Prescription Drugs: Abuse and Addiction. More detailed look at research findings on prescription drug abuse. For a general audience. (Report). En Español



NIDA InfoFacts: Methylphenidate (Ritalin®). Overview of the health effects of Ritalin® when it is used for non-medical purposes. For a general audience. (Fact sheet).



NIDA InfoFacts: Steroids (Anabolic-Androgenic). Brief description of the health hazards of anabolic steroids when they are used for non-medical purposes. For a general audience. (Fact sheet).

## Other NIDA Resources on Prescription Medications

- Prescription Drugs of Abuse Chart
- Prescription Drug Abuse (Topics in Brief PDF formatted, 88Kb)

<u>View all related NIDA publications</u> >> 2113140since 2/07/01

- InfoFacts (fact sheets)
- NIDA Notes (newsletter)
- Addiction Science & <u>Clinical Practice</u> (journal for researchers & health care providers)
- Mind Over Matter: Drug info for grades 5-9
- Topics in Brief

#### Other Web Sites

- Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs -(ONDCP, PDF, 95 Kb)
- The RADARS System provides timely surveillance and monitoring to detect and characterize prescription drug abuse, misuse, and diversion
- <u>clubdrugs.gov</u> a NIDA Companion Web site
- <u>SteroidAbuse.gov</u> a
   NIDA Companion Web site
- Buying Prescription
   Medicines Online: A
   Consumer Safety Guide U.S. Food and Drug
   Administration (FDA)
- MEDLINEplus Health
   Information on Substance
   Abuse National Library
   of Medicine (NIH)
- <u>freevibe.com</u> Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)
- Scholastic Heads Up

NIDA Home | Site Map | Search | FAQs | Accessibility | Privacy | FOIA (NIH) | Employment | Print Version



The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is part of the <u>National Institutes of Health (NIH)</u>, a component of the <u>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services</u>. Questions? See our <u>Contact</u> <u>Information</u>. Last updated on Wednesday, July 29, 2009.

