

Prescription drug abuse is the fastest-growing drug problem in the United States

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A recent national survey of high-school students reported that among 12th graders surveyed, 7 of the top 10 abused substances are pharmaceuticals. Between 1997 and 2007, treatment admissions for prescription painkillers increased more than 400 percent. Between 2004 and 2008, the number of visits to hospital emergency departments involving the non-medical use of narcotic painkillers increased 111 percent. In addition, the latest National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that most people who abuse these drugs are getting them from friends and family or from a doctor.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy recommends that people carefully monitor prescription drugs in the home; properly dispose of unused or expired prescription drugs, by taking them to a law enforcement-sponsored take-back event in your community; support efforts to educate physicians about opiate painkiller prescribing; and share information about the dangers of prescription drug abuse with your family, friends, and members of the public through newsletters, emails, and Web sites.