



## *Tips for Preventing Rx Abuse in Your Own Home.*

Think about your home. What prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs do you have? Where are they kept? Would you know if some were missing? The good news is that you can take steps immediately to limit access to these drugs and help keep your teen drug-free:

1. Safeguard all drugs at home. Monitor quantities and control access. Take note of how many pills are in a bottle or pill packet, and keep track of refills. This goes for your own medication, as well as for your teen and other members of your household. If you find you have to refill medication more often than expected, there could be a real problem—someone may be taking your medication without your knowledge. If your teen has been prescribed a drug, be sure you control the medication, and monitor dosages and refills.
2. Set clear rules for teens about all drug use, including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider's advice and dosages. Make sure your teen uses prescription drugs only as directed by a medical provider and follows instructions



for OTC products carefully. This includes taking the proper dosage and not using with other substances without a medical provider's approval. Teens should never take prescription or OTC drugs with street drugs or alcohol. If you have any questions about how to take a drug, call your family physician or pharmacist.

3. Be a good role model by following these same rules with your own medicines. Examine your own behavior to ensure you set a good example. If you misuse your prescription drugs, such as share them with your kids, or abuse them, your teen will take notice. Avoid sharing your drugs and always follow your medical provider's instructions.
4. Properly conceal and dispose of old or unused medicines in the trash. Unused prescription drugs should be hidden and thrown away in the trash. So that teens or others don't take them out of the trash, you can mix them with an undesirable substance (like used coffee grounds or kitty litter) and put the mixture in an empty can or bag. Unless the directions say otherwise, do NOT flush medications down the drain

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or toilet because the chemicals can pollute the water supply. Also, remove any personal, identifiable information from prescription bottles or pill packages before you throw them away.

5. Ask friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs, as well. Make sure your friends and relatives, especially grandparents, know about the risks, too, and encourage them to regularly monitor their own medicine cabinets. If there are other households your teen has access to, talk to those families as well about the importance of safeguarding medications. If you don't know the parents of your

child's friends, then make an effort to get to know them, and get on the same page about rules and expectations for use of all drugs, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Follow up with your teen's school administration to find out what they are doing to address issues of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse in schools.

Talk to your teen about the dangers of abusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs. These are powerful drugs that, when abused, can be just as dangerous as street drugs.

## **Majority of Youths Say Their Parents Are Involved in Their Lives and Would Disapprove of Their Substance Use**

Between 89 percent and 93 percent of youths say that their parents would strongly disapprove of their drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or using marijuana, according to an analysis of data from the 2007 National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health.

The majority of youths also report that their parents are actively involved in their lives, as shown by the fact that their parents always or sometimes let them know when they had done a good job (86.2 percent), made them do chores around the house (87.8 percent), and provided help with homework (80.9 percent).

However, perceived disapproval of substance use and parental involvement decreased as youths got older. For example, 93.8 percent of youths ages 12 or 13 report that their parents would strongly disapprove of their alcohol use, compared to 85.2 percent of youths ages 16 or 17.

According to the authors, "previous

research shows that youths who perceive that their parents disapprove of substance use and who report that their parents are involved in their day-to-day activities are less likely than those who do not to use alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs". That these factors decreased as youths got older indicates a need for increased parental communication and involvement in the later teen years.

*SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), "Parental Involvement in Preventing Youth Substance Use," The NSDUH Report, May 28, 2009. Available online at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k9/159/ParentInvolvement.cfm>.*



## Americans Rank Prevention as Most Important Health Reform Priority

A new public opinion poll conducted by the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) was released recently. It found that Americans rank prevention as the most important health care reform priority and overwhelmingly support increasing funding for prevention programs to reduce disease and keep people healthy.

In the poll, 70 percent of Americans ranked investing in prevention between an eight and 10 on a scale of zero to ten, where zero means not at all an important health care priority and 10 means very important. Forty-six percent rated prevention as a 10 out of 10.

Overall, prevention was rated higher than all other proposals, including providing tax credits to small businesses and prohibiting health insurers from denying coverage based on health status.

The poll also found that more than three-quarters of Americans (76 percent) support increasing funding for prevention programs that provide people with information and resources and creating policies that help people make healthier choices.

Investing in prevention is popular across the political

spectrum, with 86 percent of Democrats, 71 percent of Republicans, and 70 percent of Independents supporting investing more in prevention.

While Americans believe that prevention will save money (77 percent agree with the statement that "prevention will save us money"), they strongly support prevention regardless of its impact on costs.

Rather, they point clearly to keeping people healthy as the best reason to invest in prevention, with 72 percent agreeing with the statement that "investing in prevention is worth it even if it doesn't save us money, because it will prevent disease and save lives." Additionally, 57 percent agree more with the statement "we should invest in prevention to keep people healthier and improve quality of life" than

the statement "we should invest in prevention to lower health care costs" (21 percent).

Americans believe the nation needs to put more emphasis on prevention (59 percent) rather than thinking there needs to be more emphasis on treatment (15 percent), by nearly a four to one ratio.

This represents a significant shift toward prevention over the last two decades — in 1987, only 45 thought there should be greater emphasis on prevention.

The poll reflects the responses from 1,014 registered voters, and was conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Public Opinion Strategies from May 7 to 12, 2009. The margin of error was +/- 3.1 percent.



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## **Come and Join NCADD at the Middlesex County Fair August 3rd to 9th.**

NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc. will join dozens of other exhibitors at the 71st annual Middlesex County Fair scheduled for August 3rd through August 9th. The annual event will be held at Cranbury Road in East Brunswick.

Several thousands are expected to visit the NCADD and Coalition tables where they can review and pick up brochures dealing with a variety of alcohol, drug and tobacco abuse issues. NCADD employees and Coalition members will be on hand to pass out giveaways and provide helpline information to those in need.

For more information about the 2009 Middlesex County Fair, please go to <http://middlesexcountyfair.org/>.

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) of Middlesex County, Inc. is a private, non-profit, community-based health organization providing prevention, education, information and referral services to county residents, businesses, schools, faith-based organizations, municipal alliances, and social service agencies since 1980.

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