

## Fact or Myth?

**MYTH:** *Because prescription drugs sometimes make people more healthy, they are a safe way to get high.*

**FACT:** Prescription drugs should only be used by the person the doctor has prescribed them to and in the way they have ordered. These drugs are very strong and can have serious consequences when used improperly.

**MYTH:** *My child does not abuse prescription drugs, so there is no need to lock my medicine cabinet.*

**FACT:** Only 4.7% of young prescription drug abusers get their drugs from a stranger or over the internet. The fact is, many kids will go through their friends' medicine cabinets. Protect your child's friends; lock your medicine cabinet.

The Bernards Township Municipal Alliance Against Substance Abuse is a community coalition administered by the Bernards Township Health Department.

The Municipal Alliance provides consultation, programs, training and resources to members of the Bernards Township community with the goal of preventing and reducing the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. For

more information, visit



**Bernards Township Municipal  
Alliance Against Substance Abuse  
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## The Truth About Prescription Drug Use:



### Empowering Smart Decisions



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## Prescription Drug Abuse

Over 6.2 million people ages 12 and up report abusing prescription drugs, and 4,047 children and young adults begin experimenting with these dangerous substances everyday. Prescription drugs are nothing to joke about. They can cause serious effects to the body and brain, and can lead to death.

Only 4.7% of young people report getting prescription drugs from strangers, drug dealers, or over the internet, which means that 95.3% get them from people they know. They may get them from friends, or steal them from friends', parents', or relatives' medicine cabinets.

On November 13, 2010, Basking Ridge will host its 2nd annual Operation Medicine Cabinet, an annual event to turn in old and unused prescription drugs. This initiative keeps dangerous substances out of the hands of young people. Be on the lookout for more information and help keep our community safe for young people.

According to the 2009 American Drug & Alcohol Survey, taken by Bernards Township students, **14%** of seniors report using prescription painkillers in the past year, a **7%** increase from 2006-2007.

## Guidelines for Prevention

You can have a direct impact on protecting today's youth from abusing prescription drugs. Some things you can do are:

- **Lock your meds:** Make sure kids don't have access to your medicine.
- **Take inventory:** Write down the names and amount of what you currently have and regularly check that nothing is missing.
- **Educate yourself and your child:** Learn about commonly abused prescription drugs (pain relievers, sedatives, stimulants, and tranquilizers). Communicate the dangers and your expectations to your child regularly; once is not enough.
- **Set clear rules and monitor behavior:** Having clear family rules is key to prevention.
- **Pass on your knowledge to other parents:** Share you knowledge with your child's friends' parents. With the proper support, you can create community change and lead young people to healthy, drug-free lives.



## Effects of Prescription Drug Abuse

Depressants and painkillers are two commonly abused prescription drugs and both are habit forming and have serious side effects.

### Depressants cause:

- Slowed brain activity
- Feelings and effects similar to alcohol intoxication
- Stumbling
- Difficulty concentrating
- Slurred speech
- Poor coordination
- Impaired judgment
- Difficulty remembering
- Sleepiness
- Slowed breathing
- Large dose can lead to coma and death
- Mixing with alcohol can also be lethal

### Painkillers cause:

- Lack of interest in normal activities
- Light-headedness
- Slow and shallow breathing
- Liver and pancreas damage
- Temporary sense of relaxation and well-being
- Overdose can lead to death



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