

# What you need to know about Prescription Drug Abuse (PDA)

Many people benefit from drugs prescribed to them by their doctors. When not taken as prescribed, these drugs can become as addictive and dangerous as illegal drugs.

## Most Common Classes of Abused Prescription Drugs:

- **Opioids**, or pain killers, like OxyContin, Vicodin and Percocet.
- **Stimulants**, or “uppers”, like Ritalin and Adderall. These drugs are used for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and obesity.
- **CNS Depressants**, or “downers”, like Nambutal, Xanax, and Valium. These drugs are used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders.

## Risks of PDA:

- Addiction
- Seizures
- Heart problems
- Withdrawal
- Overdose and death



## Warning Signs of PDA:

1. **Usage increase.** The person may need to take more than they used to because they have built up a tolerance.
2. **Continued using.** The person may continue to take the drug even after they have gotten better. The person will go to great lengths to get their drug. They may:
  - *Use multiple doctors or pharmacies to cover up the amount and frequency of prescription medication use*
  - *Make excuses to obtain more medication*
  - *Complain frequently about “still feeling pain”*
  - *Make continuous reports of medication being lost or stolen*
  - *Report of spilling or losing the prescription bottle*
  - *Ask others for their left over medications*
  - *Have frequent emergency room visits at different hospitals*
  - *Change or forge a prescription*
  - *Steal medication*
  - *Buy medication from drug dealers or off of the internet*
3. **Change in personality, daily habits, or appearance.** The person may have changes in mood, energy, sleeping and/or eating habits. They may lose a lot of weight. Their personal cleanliness may decline. Their eyes may look red and glazed.
4. **Social withdrawal.** The person may isolate themselves from family, friends and co-workers.
5. **Defensiveness.** The person will deny they have a problem and make excuses for the need to use.

Are you or someone you know abusing prescription drugs?

## Alcohol and Drug Use Screening Tool

Yes to 1 or 2 questions = possible problem  
Yes to 3 or 4 questions = probable problem

1. Have you felt you ought to **C**ut down on your drinking or drug use?  
Yes No
2. Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking or drug use?  
Yes No
3. Have you felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking or drug use?  
Yes No
4. Have you ever had a drink or used drugs first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover (“**E**ye-Opener” )?  
Yes No

## What Can I Do?

*When people realize that they are “hooked” on a prescription drug they are often afraid to tell their doctor because they fear their medication will be stopped. They do not get the help they need. Admitting that you have a problem with drugs takes courage. Knowing and admitting that your prescription drug use is putting a strain on your life is the first step toward beating it. The next step is to seek professional help. Withdrawal symptoms may require medical care.*