

# DON'T BE A SPECTATOR

## WHEN IT COMES TO **STARTING CONVERSATIONS** WITH OTHERS ABOUT PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS



Speak up and engage in important conversations. Starting conversations with others will allow you to become educated and inform community members about practices for safe use, safe storage, and safe disposal of prescription opioids and other medications.

*Safe decisions begin with simple conversations.*



### 1 Talk with your doctor

Talk openly with your doctor and explore alternatives to opioids. Share information about other medications being taken and don't hesitate to ask questions. Learn about safe practices for your prescription medications.

### 2 Speak to your pharmacist

Listen to your pharmacist and ensure that all instructions correspond to your doctor's directions. Read all printed information that is provided and ask questions about your prescription or over the counter (OTC) medication.

### 3 Inform your adolescents

Lead adolescents to make safe decisions, including the decision not to misuse or divert prescriptions. Discuss serious consequences of improper use of prescriptions and explain how to make healthy decisions.

### 4 Involve your community

Spread awareness on safe practices of prescription drugs in your community and educate others about free prescription take back locations and prescription take back events that assist in safe disposal of all medications.

# Your conversations can help create a safe chemical health environment.

## 1 Learn the Facts

Talk with your doctor to learn how you can safely use, store, and dispose your prescriptions. Have a full understanding of all medications in your household and be aware of substances that your adolescents may have access to. Know common types of prescription opioids (highly addictive pain relievers) such as oxycodone (OxyContin® and Percocet®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), and codeine.

## 2 Start the Conversation

Initiate conversations with others about their chemical health. Start talking to adolescents and community members about prescription drugs and inform them on their roles in making safe decisions. Proper awareness and education of prescription opioids and other medications will keep others healthy.

## 3 Know the Signs

You are one of the first lines of defense in recognizing any questionable decisions or behaviors from your adolescents. Be aware of how your child is handling their busy academic and extracurricular schedule and stay in contact with them regularly for support. By talking to your adolescents, offering a line of support, and setting a positive example, you can help them make safe chemical health decisions.

## *Safe Use, Storage, and Disposal*

Encourage others to learn about safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription drugs. Inform others to only take medications prescribed to them, not give away their medications, and listen to doctors and pharmacists whenever instructions are given.

As a parent you should always oversee all medications, administer each dose, and safeguard prescriptions that are not in use. Safe storage can be achieved by securing medications in household safes or lock boxes, installing locking mechanisms on medicine cabinets, and monitoring the amount of a prescription that remains each time a dose is taken.

Medications often sit in easy to access areas long after they are still being taken. By teaching others how to discard their unused medications at drug take back locations, you can help to minimize the risks of prescription diversion, misuse, and abuse.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The teen brain continues to develop through adolescence until the mid-late 20's. These years are critical for development of the brain, particularly regions of that brain that assist in impulse and emotional control. Misuse of prescription drugs, especially highly addictive drugs such as opioid pain relievers, can alter development, affect the reward system, and lead to increased risk of addiction as an adult.