

Most people who abuse prescription drugs get them from a friend or relative for free.

# Are Your Prescriptions Safe?

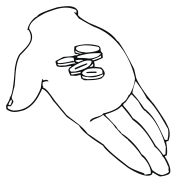
The misuse of prescription drugs is second only to marijuana as the nation's most prevalent drug problem. In 2005, the most common source from which prescription drugs were obtained was from a friend or relative for free; often from the family medicine cabinet.<sup>2</sup> Below are some ideas for keeping your prescription medications safe.

## 1. Lock them up.

Store your prescription drugs in a locked, secure place such as a cabinet or safe. This will ensure that no one accesses your medicines and can misuse or abuse them.<sup>3</sup>



## 2. Do not share prescriptions.



Did you know that sharing your prescriptions is illegal? Prescription drugs must be used in exactly the manner that they are prescribed. By sharing medicines, these drugs may interact with other medications or may be taken improperly, thus becoming dangerous.

## 3. Check quantities.

Keep track of the quantities of your prescription medicines. Count how many pills are in a bottle or pill packet.<sup>2</sup>



## 4. Keep track of your refills.



Be aware of how often you have to refill a prescription. If it is more than recommended, there may be a problem with someone else using your medications.<sup>3</sup>

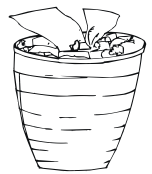
## 5. Don't save expired prescriptions.

If a prescription medication has expired, dispose of it. This will reduce the chance that someone will use the medicine improperly.<sup>3</sup>



## 6. Properly dispose of prescriptions.

Do not flush prescription medicines unless specifically instructed to do so by the medication instructions. Mix unused medications with an undesirable substance such as cat litter or coffee grounds. Then place it in a sealed container and dispose of it in the trash. Some communities also offer "take-back" programs where you can take back unused or expired medications. Check with your pharmacy to see if a program is available in your area.<sup>1</sup>



For more information about prescription drug abuse, visit [www.fightrxabuse.org](http://www.fightrxabuse.org).



The Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Unifying science, education and services to transform lives.

1. Office of National Drug Control Policy. (2007). Proper disposal of prescription drugs. Retrieved on Feb 3, 2007 from the Web site: [http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper\\_disposal.html](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper_disposal.html)

2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2007). Keep prescription drugs out of reach. Retrieved on Feb 3, 2007 from the Web site: <http://www.samhsa.gov/rxsafety/SAMHSA2tagged.pdf>

3. Partnership for a Drug-Free America. (2005). Getting high on prescription and over-the-counter drugs is dangerous: A guide to keeping your teenager safe in a changing world. Retrieved on Feb 3, 2007 from the Web site: <http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/PHD1113/PHD1113.pdf>