

STIMULANT IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

WHAT ARE
STIMULANTS AND
COUNTERFEIT
PILLS?



The Prescription Playbook is an Illinois statewide education and awareness campaign designed to help prevent opioid, prescription pain reliever, and stimulant diversion, misuse, and abuse by adolescent athletes.

ILHPP.ORG/PRESCRIPTION-PLAYBOOK/

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Education and awareness provide the foundation for individuals to make safe and informed decisions.

Stimulants are powerful, psychoactive substances that can speed up the body's central nervous system. Stimulants are commonly prescribed for people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Narcolepsy. Unfortunately, stimulants can be easily accessed and misused. Adolescents can acquire stimulants through nicotine, caffeine, some dietary supplements such as pre-workout supplements, prescription diversion from their peers, or medicine cabinets at home.

[Learn more from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration¹⁰](#)

WHY DO PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS NEED STIMULANT EDUCATION?

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT THAT ALLOWS ADOLESCENTS TO MAKE HEALTHY DECISIONS.

Parents have the ability to support their teens by encouraging them to make healthy and responsible decisions. By starting conversations with doctors, adolescents, and others in the community about the misuse of prescription and non-medicinal stimulants, parents can influence significant positive change. Having informative discussions, becoming educated and aware of various types of stimulants, and knowing the effects they can have on the body will further equip parents and their community to take action and create a safe chemical environment for their adolescents.

A simple way that parents can take the first step to create a safe environment is by learning the facts through education and awareness of stimulants. One way this can be achieved is by talking to healthcare professionals and pharmacists. Parents can have conversations with their child's doctor about the prescription stimulant they have been prescribed. Parents should take the initiative to learn from their doctor and pharmacist all they can about the medication. Are there potential side effects their child could experience while on the medication? Are there medications or substances their child should stay away from while taking the prescription stimulant? Having the answers to these questions is the first step to prescription medication safety and sharing this information with adolescents can help them make safe chemical decisions as well. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), in 2019, 23.4% of youth who were prescribed with a prescription stimulant in the past year had misused them.¹⁰

By having conversations with adolescents, parents can help them understand how to be responsible with their medications.

It is not only essential for parents to monitor their child's intake of prescription stimulants, but they also need to take the time to learn what non-medicinal stimulants their child might be taking as well. Non-medicinal stimulants such as caffeine are incredibly accessible and are dangerous when consumed in high amounts. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), adolescents should be consuming no more than 100 mg/day of caffeine (roughly two cans of soda).¹ However, adolescents have access to dietary supplements (ex: pre-workouts), energy drinks and some coffee beverages that contain caffeine amounts that are well over the recommended dose.

It is also important that parents are aware that teens might have access to these substances in certain situations through potential diversion. According to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, a survey was conducted on 192 students who had a valid prescription for stimulants and of those students, 60% of them had been approached by their peers to give away or sell their prescriptions.⁸ Parents are the first line of defense in recognizing and addressing teens' behaviors. Parents should always be aware of how their teens are coping with academic and extracurricular schedules and stay in contact with them regularly as support systems. By carefully monitoring teens, offering lines of support, and setting positive examples as role models and leaders, parents can keep their teens on a path to making healthy decisions.

Another important part in creating a safe chemical health environment is for parents to share information that they learned from doctors and healthcare professionals with others. Informing adolescents about the risks associated with the use of stimulants and teaching them about the safe use of prescription stimulants if prescribed, will allow them to make healthy decisions even when there are no adults around to lead the way.

STIMULANT

A class of drug that increases the activity or speeds up the body's central nervous system. Stimulants can temporarily increase alertness, attention, and energy levels.¹⁰

PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT

Medications that are generally used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy.¹⁰

ILLICIT STIMULANT

Illicit or illegal stimulants include cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA/ecstasy, and synthetic cathinones, or more commonly known as "bath salts." These are different from Epson salts.

NON-MEDICINAL STIMULANTS

Stimulants that do not require a prescription. This category includes caffeine, nicotine, over-the-counter stimulants, and dietary supplements that contain stimulants.

PRESCRIPTION DIVERSION

Prescription diversion is the sharing or selling of one's own or another individual's prescription medication. Prescription diversion is a common method of access for those who misuse prescription stimulants.

PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT MISUSE

The misuse of a prescription stimulant is using the prescription in a way other than how it is prescribed by a healthcare professional. This includes taking a dose at the wrong time, accepting prescription medications from a friend, taking stimulants for reasons other than what they were prescribed for, or not following medical instructions as labeled or directed.

PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT ABUSE

Using a prescription with the intent of experiencing a "high" associated with the stimulant/s. The most recognizable difference between prescription misuse and abuse is the intention of how the stimulant is being used.



Start the Conversation

Teens need their parents to start talking about the safe use of prescription and non-medicinal stimulants. Parents can help adolescents understand the misconceptions behind taking stimulant medications without a prescription, as well as understand the dangers of taking a non-medicinal stimulant, such as caffeine, at a higher than recommended dose.

Safe decisions begin with simple conversations.



56.1% 8th graders in 2020 are 56.1% more likely than 2017's 8th graders to have tried amphetamines (ex. Adderall or Ritalin).⁹



Almost 1/3 of parents falsely believe prescription stimulants can improve academic performance even if their child does not have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).¹⁰

1/3

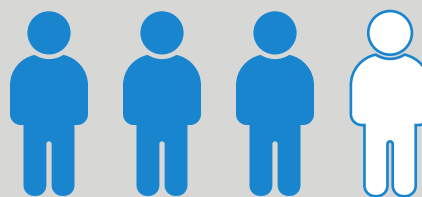
What if my child is prescribed a stimulant?

Talk openly with your doctor or healthcare provider about the stimulant medication your child has been prescribed. When with your doctor, share information about other medications or supplements that are being taken and don't hesitate to ask questions. If you or your adolescent are prescribed a stimulant, stay in communication with your doctor if you have any questions regarding side effects or begin to experience signs pointing towards stimulant tolerance or stimulant dependence. No matter what medication you are prescribed, remember to always follow the guidelines for safe use, safe storage and safe disposal.

* Be certain that you are always holding onto the bottle or source of medication. Administer the dose and lock the medication in between doses. If you do not have a locking cabinet, prescription lock box, or household safe, place the medications up and away and out of sight from everyone. Monitor your medicine cabinet or the place where you are keeping the medications and count the number of doses that remain after each use. Guard and discard any leftover medications at a prescription take back location near you.

Wait... Caffeine is a Stimulant?

YES! Caffeine is a stimulant and parents should be monitoring the amount of caffeine their adolescent is consuming daily. The best way to do this is by checking nutrition labels and ingredient lists. As recommended by the AACP, adolescents should be consuming no more than 100mg/day of caffeine (roughly 2 12oz cans of soda or 1 cup of home-brewed coffee).¹



3 out of 4 adolescents say they consume some type of caffeine regularly.¹¹

Every day in the United States, 1,600 youth will smoke their first cigarette and 200 of these youth will go on to smoke every day.³



Nearly 9 out of 10 adults who smoke daily tried their first cigarette by age 18.³

Nicotine

Did you know that nicotine is also a stimulant? Nicotine is the main psychoactive ingredient found in tobacco products.³

Not only can nicotine and tobacco products cause damage to the respiratory tract, but nicotine is a highly addictive substance that can lead to developing a substance use disorder.

Why might your adolescent want to use/misuse a stimulant?

To help prevent your adolescent from misusing stimulants, it is important to understand why they might be motivated to use a stimulant in the first place. There are a variety of motivating factors that parents should be aware of. One of the most common motivators is improving performance at school or work. Additional motivators could include cognitive enhancement, increasing concentration and energy levels, weight loss, and experiencing the euphoria that can occur when taking a higher dose of a stimulant.¹⁰

If your child is prescribed with a stimulant, talk with them about the safe use and safe storage of that medication. Help your child understand that they should never share or give away their prescription medications with anybody for any reason.

THREE STEPS FOR SAFE CHEMICAL HEALTH DECISIONS

01

Safe Use Starts With You

Understanding the safe use of prescription stimulants and non-medicinal stimulants (caffeine, nicotine, etc.) will greatly reduce the risk of diversion and misuse. The improper use of prescriptions and stimulants often stems from a misunderstanding of that medication or substance and a failure to acknowledge the potential risks associated with these drugs. Another factor that has largely contributed to excessive numbers of misuse of various stimulants across the country is a lack of education.

Increased education and awareness of prescription and non-medicinal stimulants can help provide individuals with tools to make safe and informed chemical health decisions.

There are five simple steps (Talk, Know, Read, Avoid, Monitor) that you can follow to ensure safe use of your stimulants and encourage others to begin learning more about substances before they are prescribed or taken. Learning the steps of safe use is fundamental to creating a safe chemical health environment for yourself and others. Taking what you learn and sharing these tools with others is equally important.

02

Safe Storage Protects Others

You can safely store prescription stimulants and non-medicinal stimulants in your household so they are not visible or accessible to family members, friends, or visitors.

If your child is prescribed with a stimulant from their doctor, be certain that you are always holding onto the bottle or source of medication. Monitor your medicine cabinet or the place where you are keeping the medications and count the number of doses after each use.

Safeguard your medicine cabinet. This can be achieved by installing a lock equipped medicine cabinet and a cabinet to house any nicotine/cafeinated products, storing prescription stimulants in household safe or prescription lock boxes, and keeping track of quantity of doses that remain after each use/dose. Safe storage will keep unnecessary prescriptions and stimulants out of easy to access areas and reduce diversion.

Unfortunately, many adults report unsafe storage methods of medications such as prescription stimulants even in households with children and adolescents. Given that a large number of individuals who misuse stimulants access them from friends or family members, there is a need for increased emphasis on safe methods of storage to protect others.

03

Safe Disposal Is a Solution for All

Safe disposal will reduce the likelihood that prescription and non-medicinal stimulants are available for misuse and diversion to others. There are several ways that you can discard stimulants to protect those in your household and the environment.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) currently regulates and provides recommendations that vary based on specific medications and substances. However, prescription take back locations and community drug take back events sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) offer some of the safest ways to discard a variety of substances. Thousands of free drug take back locations exist across the United States, with certain locations offering 24/7 anonymous drop off capabilities.

If you are unable to take your medications to a prescription drop box location or drug disposal event, there are still ways to practice safe disposal at home. Deterra pouches are one of the safest and environmentally friendly methods to practice at home disposal. Visit deterrasystem.com to learn more or email us at rxplaybook@ilhpp.org to find out how to access Deterra pouches.

FIVE SIMPLE STEPS

Be aware of these simple steps for safe use of medications and stimulants:

Talk

Speak up and ask questions

1.) Keep a list of all medications, supplements, and non-medicinal stimulants that you are taking and share this information with your doctor and pharmacist. Address any questions, concerns, or hesitations about medications with your doctor before use. Make sure you talk with your adolescents about any medications or stimulants they are taking and teach them about the safe use of these substances.

Know

Learn about the stimulants you are putting into your body

2.) Know the risks and side effects associated with the use of prescription stimulants and non-medicinal stimulants. Understand what the appropriate dose of non-medicinal stimulant is for your child's age. Also be able to recognize what your medications look like and how to store them safely in the household.

Read

Examine labels and follow directions

3.) Only take medications prescribed to you by a doctor. Do not take someone else's medication or give away your own. Never take a medication or stimulant in a higher dose than what is prescribed or recommended. Always read and review with your adolescents the instructions given.

Avoid

Be aware of drug-drug interactions

4.) Understand how stimulants and other medications might interact with each other. This includes alcohol, other prescriptions, other stimulants, over the counter medications, vitamins, and supplements. Overuse or polysubstance use of medications can be dangerous. Make sure you and your doctor are aware of everything you are taking. It is never safe to use any form of an illicit stimulant for any reason (Methamphetamine, Ecstasy, Cocaine, Synthetic Cathinones "Bath Salts").

Monitor

Stay in contact with your doctor

5.) Monitor the effects of prescription stimulants and non-medicinal stimulants on your body or others who are taking the medication. Contact your healthcare provider if you feel that your prescription needs to be adjusted. Reach out to your doctor with any questions or concerns.

COUNTERFEIT PILLS

Always monitor the medications your adolescent is prescribed to and encourage your adolescent to never take a medication that was not prescribed by their doctor and picked up at a pharmacy.

Counterfeit pills are fake medications that have different ingredients than that of the actual medication. Counterfeit pills often times are identical to legitimate prescription medications making it easier for a person to accidentally ingest the wrong ingredients.⁵

Some counterfeit pills could contain fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 100 times more potent than morphine. Ingesting counterfeit pills that contain fentanyl can be deadly with the lethal amount of fentanyl being just two milligrams (the size of a few grains of salt).⁵ Visit dea.gov/onepill to learn more about how to keep your children safe from counterfeit pills and fentanyl.

Stimulant Identification

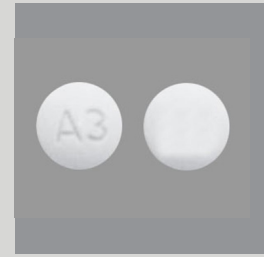
There are various types of stimulants that differ in strength depending on the time and amount taken. Images of the drugs listed or shown below vary in appearance based on their physical and chemical makeup and may look different depending on the manufacturer. This is not a comprehensive list of all stimulants. Please use this as a reference, but always refer to your doctors or healthcare professional with any questions or concerns.



AMPHETAMINES
(ADDERALL 30 MG)



METHYLPHENIDATE
(METHYLPHENIDATE SYSTEMIC 10MG)



DEXMETHYLPHENIDATE
(DEXMETHYLPHENIDATE SYSTEMIC 10)



BENZPHETAMINE
(BENZPHETAMINE SYSTEMIC 50 MG)



PHENTERMINE
(PHENTERMINE HYDROCHLORIDE)



PHENDIMETRAZINE
(PHENDIMETRAZINE 35 MG)



METHAMPHETAMINE
(METHAMPHETAMINE SYSTEMIC 5 MG)



COCAINE
(PROVIGIL 200 MG)



MDMA/ECSTASY



SYNTHETIC CATHINONES
(“BATH SALTS”)

DRUG	BRAND NAMES	STREET NAMES ¹¹
AMPHETAMINES (DEXTRAMPHETAMINE-AMPHETAMINE, DEXTROAMPHETAMINE) ⁷	ADDERALL®, DEXEDRINE®	BENNIES, BLACK BEAUTIES, CRANK, ICE, SPEED, UPPERS
METHYLPHENIDATE AND DEXMETHYLPHENIDATE ⁷	RITALIN®, CONCERTA®, META- DATE®, METHYLIN®	PELLETS, R-BALL, SKIPPY, VITAMIN-R
BENZPHETAMINE ⁷	DIDREX®	N/A
PHENTERMINE ⁷	ADIPEX®, LONAMIN®	N/A
PHENDIMETRAZINE ⁷	PRELU-2®	N/A
METHAMPHETAMINE ⁶	DESOXYN®	BATU, BIKER'S COFFEE, BLACK BEAUTIES, CHALK, CHICKEN FEED, CRANK, CRYSTAL, GLASS, GO-FAST, HYROPON, ICE, METH, METHLIES QUICK, POOR MAN'S COCAINE, SHABU, SHARDS, SPEED, STOVE TOP, TINA, TRASH, TWEAK, UPPERS, VENTANA, VIRDRIO, YABA, YELLOBAM
COCAINE ⁶	PROVIGIL®, NUVIGIL®, SUNOSI®, NUMBRINO, GOPRETTO	BLOW, COCA, COKE, CRACK, FLAKE, SNOW, SODA COT
MDMA/ECSTASY ⁶	ILLCIT- NOT SOLD COMMERCIALY	ADAM, BEANS, CLARITY, DISCO, BISCUIT, E, ECSTASY, EVE, GO, HUG DRUG, LOVER'S SPEED, MDMA, PEACE, STP, X, XTC
SYNTHETIC CATHINONES ("BATH SALTS") ⁴	ILLCIT- NOT SOLD COMMERCIALY	BLISS, BLUE SILK, CLOUD NINE, ENERGY-1, IVORY WAVE, LUNAR WAVE, MEOW MEOW, OCEAN BURST, PURE IVORY, PURPLE WAVE, RED DOVE, SNOW LEOPARD, STARDUST, VANILLA SKY, WHITE DOVE, WHITE KNIGHT, WHITE LIGHTNING

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Other Resources

- NIDA for Kids - teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/prescription-pain-medications-opioids
- CDC - cdc.gov/drugoverdose/opioids/index.html
- FDA - fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/InformationbyDrugClass/ucm337066.htm
- Partnership for Drug Free Kids - drugfree.org/drug/prescription-pain-relievers-opioids/
- Illinois Youth Survey - iys.cprd.illinois.edu/
- Monitoring the Future - monitoringthefuture.org/



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