

THE EFFECTS OF ABUSING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ARE PAINFULLY OBVIOUS



MYTH OR REALITY?

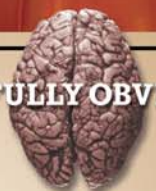
GET THE FACTS ABOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

- MYTH:** Getting high from prescription drug abuse will make you look cool.
- REALITY:** Throwing up in the hallways isn't cool.
- MYTH:** Getting involved in prescription drug abuse will get you more friends.
- REALITY:** Violent seizures caused by abusing prescription drugs freak people out—not the best way to win friends.
- MYTH:** Giving prescription drugs to a friend is no big deal.
- REALITY:** Going to jail is a big deal.

To learn the facts about the effects of prescription drug abuse, visit www.painfullyobvious.com

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PAINFULLY OBVIOUS



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IT'S A SKIT, GET IT?

WHO'S "HIGH" AT FOREST HILL HIGH?

THE SETTING (Monday morning at Forest Hill High around 8:00 A.M., minutes before homeroom.) Allie and Christina are talking about the weekend as they organize their lockers before first period. Allie looks down the hallway for Sean, a senior who has a big crush on her. The girls are joined by Derek and Mike who tell them what occurred after the "Battle of the Bands" involving the misuse of prescription drugs. Read on to find out who's "getting high" at Forest Hill High.

THE STUDENTS



Allie: A sophomore on the girl's soccer team and a member of the drama club



Mike: A senior who plays lead guitar in a local band called Mercury Crush



Christina: A sophomore and one of Allie's closest girlfriends



Derek: A junior who plays for the football team

Allie: So, how was the "Battle of the Bands" Saturday night?

Christina: I wouldn't know. I couldn't go because it was my grandmother's 80th birthday party. You could call my Saturday night "Battle of the Bland." Why didn't you go?

Allie: I volunteered at the shelter all day and then invited a few girls from the drama club to rehearse at my house. I didn't want to leave Dudley alone for so many hours.

Christina: How is Dudley, anyway?

Allie: Oh, he's doing so much better. He's so cute! You should see how he follows me around everywhere I go.

(Enter Derek, who interrupts the conversation.)

Derek: Who do you mean, Allie? Sean?

Christina: No, Derek! She means her dog, Dudley. Just like how you follow us around school.

(Allie smiles and tries to hide her laughing behind her notebook.)

Derek: Whatever Christina, I'm crushed. Hey, speaking of crush, did you guys hear what happened after the "Battle of the Bands" this weekend?

Allie: No, what's the story?

Derek: Check it out, Saturday night after Mercury Crush played the closing act...

(Just then, Mike joins the group and interrupts Derek.)

Mike: Dude, you are the biggest gossip in school!

Allie: Mike, what happened Saturday night?

Christina: Yeah, tell us what really happened before we get the "Derek version."

Mike: Nothing happened, other than a great gig for Mercury Crush. But something pretty wild happened afterwards. A few of the bands met at a drummer's house to hang out.

Allie: And?

Derek: It started out as a great time. Someone ordered a tower of pizzas.

Christina: I knew you'd mention the food!

Mike: Yeah, we were having a cool time just jamming to music until this drummer began passing out pills.

Allie: Pills? What kind of pills?

Mike: Prescription drugs. You know, medicines a doctor would prescribe.

Allie: (interrupting) Did you see who took the pills?

Mike: I saw a couple of people taking them.

Allie: Hey, was Sean there?

Mike: I don't know, I didn't see him.

Christina: So, why would that guy give out pills?

Derek: I guess he and some losers thought it would be cool to get high on prescription drugs.

Mike: Yeah, real cool, except the pills he gave out were stimulants. They made one of the bass players from another band have a seizure. This guy didn't look so cool puking his brains out and being carried away on a stretcher.

Derek: I heard this guy isn't even a druggie. His girlfriend said he's never done drugs.

Abusing prescription drugs can result in serious physical effects such as dangerously high body temperatures, irregular heartbeats, comas, and seizures.

It is possible to die from an overdose the very first time someone abuses a prescription drug.

Christina: So why do people take these medicines if they are so dangerous?

Derek: You're only supposed to take them if your doctor prescribes them for you—like when you're sick, Christina!

Allie: Unreal! We're studying the brain in biology class. Abusing any kind of drug, including prescription medicines, can seriously affect your brain and your body. That drummer is lucky he didn't die.

Derek: Well, he didn't die, but he'll wish his life were over. By the time he gets back to school, every freshman to senior will know what happened to him.

Mike: And the drummer who passed out the drugs has even bigger problems. I heard that the police are involved. He may even go to jail!

Christina: No way! That sort of thing just isn't good for your reputation.

Mike: Yeah, in one night your image can change—from being totally cool to being a total loser.

Allie: Loser? Do you think? Sweating, puking, passing out—sounds like the reasons not to abuse prescription drugs are pretty obvious.

Mike: Yeah, painfully obvious.

Derek: Basically, abusing prescription drugs messes with your head.

Allie: Wild. Hey, I didn't realize you guys knew so much about the topic. Do you think you can help me with my biology project this weekend?

Mike: Sure. I'm down with biology, it's my physics class that's killing me.

(First period warning bell rings.)

Mike: C'mon Derek, or we're going to be late for class again!

Derek: Yeah, let's bounce! I can't get detention after school and miss any football practice. Hey, can we stop by the cafeteria for a snack?

(Derek turns quickly towards the cafeteria and slams into a crowd of freshman.)

Christina: Now that's one of his finest plays. And we wonder why our football team never wins a game. Maybe if there was a pizza in the end zone they'd be able to score!

Mike: Later, Allie. Don't forget, I'm giving you a ride home.

Allie: Okay, Mike. Talk to you later!

(The girls close their lockers and walk towards the stairwell. End.)

The misuse and abuse of prescription medicines can be dangerous.

It is illegal for someone to give or sell you a prescription medicine that was not prescribed for you.

TALK ABOUT THE SKIT

The skit you've just read outlined some of the physical and personal effects of abusing prescription drugs. In case you didn't get it, they're pretty nasty. However, the gossip about drug abusers can be even nastier! Here's the "411"—abusing prescription drugs is dangerous to you and to others. Discuss your reactions to the skit with your classmates. Here are a few questions to consider: *What would you have done in this situation? How would you avoid situations that involve drugs? What are some of the consequences of abusing prescription drugs? How do the characters in the skit react to the idea of abusing prescription drugs?*

Visit www.painfullyobvious.com to learn more about the students at Forest Hill High.

USE YOUR BRAIN

Your brain is your body's control center. It is part of the central nervous system (CNS) and controls thought processes, coordination, the five senses, motor impulses, and all of the body's organs. Prescription medicines "matter" to the brain! They can affect the way the brain operates, altering the translations of messages the brain sends and receives. It should be *painfully obvious* that any medicines which cause changes in how the brain operates are very serious. Prescription drugs can be very dangerous if abused because these medicines change the way important systems of the body operate. Below is a cross section of the brain with a sagittal view (divided into right and left halves). Read on to learn about the brain and how it works.

THALAMUS

The thalamus is a "relay station" for information that moves between other parts of the brain. It handles attention, alertness, and feelings of pain.

? *Did you know?* The thalamus consists of two egg-shaped masses, each about the size of a walnut.

CEREBELLUM

This part of the brain controls involuntary movements, balance, and posture. It also influences walking, controls eye movements, and causes muscles to contract properly and operate in sequence.

? *Did you know?* The cerebellum is one-eighth the size of the cerebrum.

HIPPOCAMPUS

(Not seen in this view) The hippocampus is a sea horse-shaped structure located deep within the limbic system (above the brain stem). It contains neurons (cells that conduct impulses and transmit information) which handle emotions and memory.

? *Did you know?* The brain contains billions of neurons!

CEREBRUM (OR CEREBRAL CORTEX)

This, the largest part of the brain, includes all the systems and lobes that deal with cognitive function such as thinking, speech, memory, and senses. These important brain tissues handle speech and the ability to read or hold simple conversations.

? *Did you know?* The cerebrum makes up 90% of the brain.

HYPOTHALAMUS

This small, yet supervisory, section of the brain handles a lot! It regulates body temperature, blood pressure, heartbeat, metabolism, sleep patterns, hormones, and emotions.

? *Did you know?* The hypothalamus wakes you up in the morning and tells your body when to sweat or shiver.

PITUITARY GLAND

Hormones that promote growth are produced here and then released into your body.

? *Did you know?* The pituitary gland is about the size of a pea!

AMYGDALA

(Not seen in this view) The amygdala is the basic survival section of the brain located within the limbic system. It handles instinctive emotions like fear, hunger, and pleasure.

? *Did you know?* The amygdala is almond-shaped.

SPINAL CORD

(Not seen in this view) It all starts here, the place where nerves relay messages to and from the brain.

? *Did you know?* The spinal cord is a "bundle of nerves" about 18 inches long, from the brain stem (medulla) to the lumbar vertebrae.

BRAIN STEM

Millions of messages from the body are sorted here. The brain stem handles involuntary muscles, as in the stomach, and the life support functions of your body, including breathing and blood circulation.

? *Did you know?* The brain stem connects the brain to the spinal cord.

USING YOUR BRAIN

Now that you know how important the brain is, think about the parts you use to complete daily activities. Beside each task, write which area(s) of the brain mainly handles each function.

- waking up _____
- remembering your keys _____
- reading class work _____
- taking a math test _____
- talking with friends _____
- eating lunch _____
- playing a sport _____
- dancing _____

THINGS THAT REALLY STIMULATE YOUR BRAIN

You don't need to use prescription drugs to get "high"—there are a lot of other things in life that you can get excited about. Allie, Mike, Christina, and Derek—the students in the skit you read—have interests that keep their minds and bodies energized, such as music, drama, animals, and sports. Write down a few things that stimulate you, such as songs, activities, people, and places. Then find another person in class who shares one of your interests.

Things that stimulate my brain:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

WHAT'S THE "SCHEDULE"?

In 1970, the U.S. government set up a system called the Controlled Substances Act to monitor the use (and abuse) of certain drugs and other substances used to produce drugs. Within this system, drugs are divided into five classes: narcotics (opioid analgesics), CNS depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, and anabolic steroids. Each class is made up of drugs that have similar effects on the body when taken.

Drugs (or controlled substances) are also scheduled (Schedules I-V) according to the potential for being harmful, value for medical purposes, and the potential for abuse, physical dependence, or addiction. For example, Schedule I drugs, like heroin, are most dangerous and have no medical use. Schedule V drugs have a lower potential for abuse compared to other drugs in Schedules I-IV and have medical value and use. One example of a Schedule V drug is cough syrup containing codeine.

While prescription medications are helpful in treating a variety of health conditions, they can be harmful—even deadly—when abused. So if you find yourself in a situation that involves the abuse of any of the five classes of drugs, including prescription drugs, go ahead—"skip class"! Don't let prescription drug abuse become part of your "schedule." This type of "skipping class" can save your life.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE IS A PRESCRIPTION FOR...

- Profuse sweating
- Explosive diarrhea
- Projectile vomiting
- Spastic shaking
- Drowsiness, dizziness and insomnia
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness
- Addiction
- Hospitalization
- DEATH

What do all these things have in common? They're all potential effects of prescription drug abuse! So what are prescription drug abusers thinking? They're not!

Besides all of the *painfully obvious* physical effects of prescription drug abuse, there are other consequences abusers may face. For example, *losing* the trust and respect of friends and family; *losing* privileges such as going out with friends; *losing* the use of electronic "toys," like cell phones or computers; *losing* the ability to participate in a favorite sport or activity. There is a lot to *lose*! No one needs these kinds of problems, especially you. Don't become a "loser." Don't abuse any kind of drug, including prescription drugs.

DID YOU SAY... Q&A?

Q: What are prescription drugs?

A: Prescription drugs are medicines regulated by the U.S. government. These medicines are helpful in treating a variety of health conditions such as asthma, severe pain, and attention and sleep disorders. Prescription drugs are only available when prescribed by a doctor or other qualified healthcare professional.

Q: When should someone take prescription drugs?

A: Some prescription drugs affect important brain and body activities. Prescription drugs should only be used when prescribed by a doctor or other qualified healthcare professional and only for the condition they are intended to treat.

Q: Are prescription drugs dangerous?

A: Prescription drugs are safe and effective when taken properly, and under the care of a doctor or other qualified healthcare professional. Abuse of prescription drugs is dangerous, and can even be deadly.

Q: When is the misuse of prescription medications considered drug abuse?

A: It is considered drug abuse when prescription medications are used specifically to get "high."

GET LABELED!

The directions on prescription medicine containers aren't decoration. Labels contain important information that explains and describes the proper use of the medicine inside. You may be familiar with this information on a label:

- Name of the patient
- Name of the medicine
- How much of the medicine should be taken (e.g., "one tablet" or "one tablespoon")
- How often the medicine should be taken (e.g., "twice daily" or "every 8 hours")
- The length of time the medicine should be taken (e.g., "until finished" or "two weeks")

But there is other information on a label that is important for you to know. Pay attention to the following:

- Name, address, and phone number of pharmacy
- Initials or name of dispensing pharmacist
- Name of prescriber (usually a doctor's name)
- Cautionary (or warning) statements
- Date dispensed
- Quantity dispensed
- Number of refills
- Expiration date

KEEP YOUR PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES IN A SAFE PLACE WHERE NO ONE ELSE CAN USE THEM BY MISTAKE (OR ON PURPOSE)!

If you take a prescription medicine to treat a medical condition, it's your responsibility to know how to take the medicine safely and properly. When you have any questions, always speak to your parents and a qualified healthcare professional, such as a doctor or pharmacist, right away—especially if you don't feel right.



CHECK OUT THESE NOT-SO-OBVIOUS STATS:

3 MILLION: Number of teens aged 12-17 who used prescription medications non-medically in their lifetimes, as of 2001*

6.2 MILLION: Estimated number of people who used prescription drugs non-medically in 2002*

50 PERCENT: Number of surveyed teens who reported that drugs are used, kept, or sold at their schools

89 PERCENT: Number of surveyed principals who thought their school grounds were drug-free

\$1.9 BILLION: Requested budget for drug prevention and prevention research by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy in 2004

\$39 BILLION: World-wide total music sales in 2002

* 2002 substance abuse statistics available at www.samhsa.gov/SAMHSA_news