

Talking to Your Kids About Counterfeit Prescription Drugs

Depending what's inside, one pill can be deadly. Talk to your kids today!

Dispel the Myths

MYTH: Prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs.

FACT: If the prescription drug is not prescribed for YOU and it doesn't come from a retail pharmacy, it is not safe.

MYTH: It's okay to take a prescription medication from a friend because I know them.

FACT: Again, if the prescription drug is not prescribed for YOU, it is not safe. Additionally, even if it's from a person you know, you don't know where they got the pill from.

MYTH: You can't overdose on prescription drugs.

FACT: Yes you can! If you don't take the medication as prescribed, you can overdose. If you purchase it from a third-party or get it from a friend, you don't know where it came from, so it could contain deadly substances like Fentanyl.

MYTH: If it looks real, it probably is.

FACT: Definitely not! People that produce counterfeit pills go out of their way to make them look real. They use special pill presses to make the same imprints as real pills have. To the untrained eye, they look real. Don't take that chance! The only safe place to get prescription pills from is a retail pharmacy.

MYTH: Taking Adderall or other stimulants can help me get better grades.

FACT: According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, researchers have found that ADHD drugs, like Adderall and Ritalin, do not improve academic performance in teens who don't have ADHD. However, it still affects their body and brain.

Talking Points

EXPLAIN THE DANGER: Kids have already heard "drugs are bad." Let them know prescription drugs aren't bad when taken as prescribed by the person they were prescribed for. However, they need to know it can be dangerous to take a pill from a friend, off the street or online because it could contain harmful substances that have the potential to cause a fatal overdose.

LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE THERE FOR THEM: We know many teens and young adults who try prescription drugs (without a prescription) are doing so to try to manage anxiety, stress, depression, do better in school or sports, or out of boredom. Let them know they can come to you if they are struggling and that you will connect them with the help they need.

IT REALLY DOES ONLY TAKE ONE PILL: Young people need to know that when substances, like Fentanyl, are added to a pill, there aren't always second chances.

PILLS THAT ARE BOUGHT ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE TYPICALLY COUNTERFEIT: The majority of pills sold on social media are fake. Even if the pill doesn't contain Fentanyl, it may contain other harmful substances that can make you very sick. No matter how real they look, don't take that chance and put your life at risk!