

What is Prescription Drug Abuse?

Do you have a hard time controlling how much prescription medication you use?

Do you need to take more pills to get the same effect?

Do you continue to use prescription medication even though you recognize negative consequences affecting your life?

Do you experience physical and emotional discomfort when you try to decrease or cut down use?

You may be addicted to prescription drugs.

There are different types of addictions. People begin misusing or abusing prescription medication for different reasons. Some may be prescribed medication for an illness or pain and become dependent and then addicted. Others become addicted as a result of using the medication recreationally.

Physical Addiction: Thousands of people use prescription medicines to help ease pain from common ailments (such as headaches and backaches) or to recover after surgery or illness. Commonly prescribed drugs such as opioids, sedatives, and stimulants also lead to chemical dependency. Some people who are addicted say they need these meds just to “feel normal.”

Psychological Addiction: Life today is very stressful. Many people experience emotional problems and need help to deal with them. There are appropriate ways of coping with attention problems, stress, anxiety, and depression. However, when individuals feel they must have prescription drugs to make it through the day, this is a sign of psychological addiction. Taking these medications without being monitored by a doctor can be very dangerous.

Visit www.wvrxabuse.org for more information



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**WEST VIRGINIA PRESCRIPTION
DRUG ABUSE QUITLINE**

Toll-free: 1-866-WV-QUIT
24 hours, 7 days a week

What is Addiction?

Addiction is a disease which disrupts the part of the brain that controls how you think, solve problems, manage emotions, and relate to others. Substances interact with the brain's "reward system" which causes you to experience feeling good. Addictive drugs provide positive reinforcement which leads to continued use despite problems caused by use. Once addicted, substances become more important than natural rewards such as eating, sex, socializing with friends, and other positive experiences. When addicted, you are controlled by drugs. When this happens, you have lost your choice to use or not to use.

The consequences of addiction get worse over time. Addiction is a progressive disease. It is never easy to quit, but if you have already suffered negative consequences due to prescription drug abuse and don't want to suffer more, there's never a better time to quit than now.

You don't have to be addicted to prescription drugs to abuse them. Read over the list of **commonly abused prescription drugs** and think about whether or not you may misuse some of them.

Prescription drugs can be known by their trademarked product name, their chemical name, or their street name.

Commonly Abused Prescription Drugs

- **Opioids** are used to treat pain and are the most commonly abused prescription drugs. Examples include morphine, codeine, OxyContin (oxycodone), Vicodin (hydrocodone) and Demerol (meperidine). Short term effects prevent pain and cause tiredness. Overdose can cause severe respiratory depression and death.
- **Sedatives** are used to treat anxiety, panic attacks, and sleep disorders. Examples are Nembutal (pentobarbital sodium), Valium (diazepam), and Xanax (alprazolam). These drugs slow down normal brain functioning and can cause sleepiness and impaired motor control. Overdose can cause coma.
- **Stimulants** are commonly used to treat the sleeping disorder narcolepsy and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Examples include Ritalin (methylphenidate), Adderall, and Dexedrine (dextroamphetamine). These drugs, which can be addictive, enhance brain activity and increase alertness and energy. They elevate blood pressure, heart rate, and respiration. Very high doses can lead to irregular heartbeat and high body temperature.

Signs of Prescription Drug Abuse

Relationship Problems

- Feeling annoyed when other people comment on or criticize your use of drugs
- Feeling remorse or guilt after using drugs
- Associating with questionable acquaintances or frequenting out of the ordinary locations to purchase or use drugs

Social Problems

- Scheduling your day around using drugs
- Focusing recreational activities around obtaining drugs, using drugs, or recovering from drug use
- Spending large amounts of time driving great distances and visiting multiple doctors to obtain drugs
- Using drugs when alone
- Withdrawing from family, friends, and other social interaction

Legal and Money Problems

- Paying bills late, collection agencies calling, inability to keep track of your money
- Being arrested, doing things that you wouldn't normally do, such as stealing to obtain drugs

Health and Behavior Concerns

- Continuing to use drugs even though you have health problems that are affected or caused by your drug use
- Shifts in energy, mood, and concentration
- Irritability, agitation, hostility, fatigue, anger, depression, anxiety, psychosis (seeing or hearing things that are not there), poor coordination
- Personal hygiene worsening
- Forgetting events that have taken place and suffering blackouts

Employment or School Problems

- Continuing to use drugs even though your job or education is in trouble
- Missing work or school or going in late

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Call **1-866-WV-QUIT** to talk to someone for free