



A Region Wide Network of Community Partners Working Together to Reduce Substance Abuse.

Unused...Unwanted...Expired

Safe Medication Disposal in the Monadnock Region & NH

Access and availability of unused medications is a growing concern in the Monadnock Region and throughout the nation due to 1) a high potential for misuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications leading to addiction, especially among youth, 2) the presence of pharmaceuticals in our water supply even after it has been treated, and 3) high rates of accidental poisonings from medications, especially among children and pets.

It's A Threat to Our Children

- More than two-thirds of all emergency department visits for childhood poisoning involve prescription and over-the-counter medications, more than twice the rate of poisonings from consumer products. 1
- 78,000 children under age 5 are treated each year for unintentional medication poisoning. 2

It's A Threat to Our Youth

- Within a 30 day period in the Monadnock Region, 9% of high school age youth used a prescription drug not prescribed to them, and 4% used over-the-counter drugs to get high. 3
- The non-medical use of prescription medicine, among US high school students, is now more common than the use of any illicit drug except marijuana. 4
- In 2008, nearly 2 million teens reported abusing prescription drugs. 70% obtained the drug from a friend or relative. Only 4% bought the drug from a drug dealer. 5
- Nationwide, there is a low level of perceived risk for sedative use, such as Xanax® and Klonopin® and amphetamine use, such as Ritalin® and Adderall® among 12th graders. 6
- Studies show that young people are less concerned about the dangers of using prescription drugs for a non-medical need because they are widely used for legitimate purposes. 7

It's A Threat to Young Adults

A Monadnock Region survey of 18-25 year olds shows that:

- 51% have used prescription drugs without a doctor's order. 8
- 36% have used over-the-counter drugs to get high. 9

It's A Threat to Older Adults

- Older adults make up only 13% of the population, but fill one-third of all prescriptions. A large percentage of older adults take multiple prescription medicines as well as over-the-counter medications and dietary supplements. Changes in metabolism with age and drug interactions make this population susceptible to medicine misuse, dependence, and addiction. 10
- Diversion and theft of prescription medicine is currently at very high levels. Older adults may be particularly at risk for victimization due to the often high quantity of medicine kept in the home. 11

It's A Threat to Pets

- In 2007, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center received 89,000 calls related to pets ingesting over-the-counter and prescription medications. 12
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, such as Advil®, Aleve®, and Motrin®, consistently top the list of medicines accidentally ingested by pets. Other drugs commonly eaten by dogs and some cats include antidepressants like Prozac®, Tylenol®, anti-anxiety drugs such as Xanax®, sleep aids like as Ambien®, and beta-blocker blood pressure medications. 13



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Communities and
Schools Together



www.MonadnockVoices.org



The Safe Medication Disposal Initiative is supported by Drug Free Communities Support Program Grants awarded to the Monadnock Alcohol and Drug Abuse Coalition and the Hinsdale Prevention Coalition in partnership with funding awarded to Monadnock Voices for Prevention from the NH Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services.



It's A Threat to the Environment and Our Health

- Over half of Americans dispose of unwanted or expired prescription medicine in the trash, which could lead to leaching or leaking of the medication from landfills.¹⁴
- One-third of Americans dispose of medication in the sink or toilet. This disposal method can lead to medications entering both the water supply and drinking water.¹⁵
- Over 80 pharmaceuticals of various prescription drug classes have been found in treated sewage, surface water, and ground water throughout the country. ¹⁶
- Studies have found that exposure to hormone therapy medication in water has been linked to serious reproductive side effects and feminization of fish. Exposure to common antidepressants has been found to cause developmental delays in frogs, fish and other species. ¹⁷

It's A Threat to Our Communities

- A new White House study found a 400% increase in prescription drug abuse between 1998 and 2008. ¹⁸
- The estimated number of emergency room visits for the non-medical use of prescription pain killers rose from more than 144,600 in 2004 to almost 306,000 in 2008. ¹⁹
- Poisoning by prescription drugs has been on the rise for 15 years and is now the second leading cause of unintentional injury death in the US. ²⁰
- **In New Hampshire, the Chief Medical Examiner reported that in 2009 more people died from prescription drug overdoses than from injuries related to car accidents. Compared to 15 homicides and 130 car accidents, prescription drug overdoses claimed 160 lives. ²¹**
- Over 800,000 websites provide prescription medicine to consumers. Direct to consumer advertising of prescription drugs implies widespread use and availability. ²²
- As many as 40% of all prescription medicines are never used. ²³

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Safeguard all medications kept at home. Keep potentially addictive medications under lock and key.
2. Don't share medications with family or friends.
3. Always follow the medical provider's advice for proper use and dosage.
4. Talk with your children about the right way to use medicine. When misused, legal medication is just as dangerous as illegal street drugs.
5. Take advantage of medication take back opportunities within your community and empty your medicine cabinet of unused, unwanted, and expired medication.

Know the facts. Visit these helpful websites for more information:

- The Drug Take Back Network: <http://www.takebacknetwork.com/about.html>
- Project Drug Drop: <http://www.projectdrugdrop.com/main>
- Prescription Pill and Drug Disposal Program—P2D2: <http://www.p2d2program.org/ownp2d2.html>
- Parents. The Anti-Drug: <http://www.theantidrug.com/Resources/>

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