

## **Attention Parents and Caregivers: Lock Your Meds!**

Parents may think of keeping their small children away from prescription medications, as they could mistake pills for candy, but these drugs can be dangerous for teens as well. According to the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Everyday, 4,047 children and young adults begin experimenting with prescription drugs.” Assuming that the majority of these teens get the prescription drugs from drug dealers is false. “Only 4.7% of children who abuse prescription drugs get them from a stranger, drug dealer, or the internet.” This means that the other 95.3% of children who misuse prescription drugs obtain them from friends of family members.

Teens may assume that prescription drugs are “safe” because they are prescribed by doctors, rather than obtained from a stranger on the street. However, these drugs are prescribed for a specific purpose, and are much more potent than children and teens may realize.

It is important to lock up your medications, properly dispose of expired medications (by placing them in coffee grounds or kitty litter before tossing them in the trash can), and count pills regularly to make sure none have gone missing. “Over 6.2 million people age 12 and older abused prescription drugs in the past month.” Was your child one of them? Talk to your kids about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

Go to <http://www.nfp.org/default.asp?PageNum=588> for more information about locking up your meds.