

# The Use and Abuse of Psychostimulant Medication: Tips for Parents and Teens

## The Facts

- Stimulant medications are controlled substances. The possession of stimulant medication without a prescription is against the law.
- Money does not need to be exchanged for a gift or other exchange of a controlled substance to be considered a “sale.”
- Appropriate treatment for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) does not increase the risk of developing substance abuse.

## Parents

- Treat your teen as an equal in the treatment process.
  - Talk about best medication doses, times, and delivery systems available.
  - Include your teen in any medication discussions with your physician.
- Keep medications in a safe, locked location.
- Parents must monitor their teen’s self-administration of medicine.
- Parents must maintain knowledge of the appropriate dosage, timing, and weekend and summer need for the medication and be aware of the teen’s readiness to take on the responsibility of self-administration in a mature manner.
- Parents must monitor medication consumption of teens with ADHD, as some teens decide on their own to stop taking their prescribed medications because of embarrassment, a desire to be like their peers who do not take medication, or denial that they have ADHD.

- If a teen decides to stop taking the prescribed medication,
  - Include the pediatrician as a mediator in the process.
  - Set up a medication-free trial with a clear definition of what behaviors would lead to a return to medication.

## Teens

- If you are caught giving just one pill away, *even without getting any money for it*, you are dealing. It is illegal and you will get in serious trouble with your parents, your school, and even the police.
- Don’t tell your friends you are taking this medicine; if your friends don’t know about it, they won’t ask you for any.
- Be careful with your medication in locker rooms and bathrooms. Don’t carry your ADHD medication in your shaving kit into the bathroom.
- Keep your medicine in a safe place. Don’t leave it out on your dresser or in your desk where people can steal it.
- Never lend you medicine to other kids. Just say, “Sorry, my doctor is crazy about this and won’t give me any extra if I run out too soon. I can’t even give you one pill. You should go get your own prescription.”
- If you carry your pills with you, always keep them in the prescription bottle.

The recommendations in this publication do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate. Original document included as part of *Caring for Children With ADHD: A Resource Toolkit for Clinicians*, 2nd Edition. Copyright © 2012 American Academy of Pediatrics. All Rights Reserved. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not review or endorse any modifications made to this document and in no event shall the AAP be liable for any such changes.

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

