

# **Be Safe!**

**There are several ways to be proactive in protecting yourself and your family from the dangers of prescription drug misuse:**

## **Ask the right questions:**

If you or a loved one are being prescribed medications for pain, sleep, anxiety, ADHD or other ailments requiring the use of a potentially addictive medication, be informed and ask the right questions, such as:

- What is the potential for addiction?
- Are there any non-addictive alternatives?
- How long will I need to take this medication?
- If you are being treated for an injury or ailment requiring a brief use of the medication, ask if it's possible to be prescribed a smaller dose and call back if your pain persists.
- What is the potential for me to experience withdrawal symptoms when I stop taking this medication? What type of support will I receive if I have withdrawals?
- How should this medication be stored?
- What are the side-effects and interactions with any of the other medications I use?
- Who can I call if I have further questions about this?

## **Don't share:**

It is a crime to share your prescription medications with others. Once out of your hands, you do not know how the medication will be used or who will be taking it.

## **Don't advertise:**

The fact that you have a medical issue and are using prescription medication should be on a need to know basis. It's not a bad idea to tell someone close to you that you trust about the issue to gain support and accountability. Think twice before sharing that information indiscriminately with people you do not know well. Homes have been broken into following postings on social media about medical problems and/or the use of pain medications.

## **Store securely:**

- The bathroom is not a good location for most medications due to the humidity levels.
- Keep medications out of reach of children.
- Keep medications locked to prevent misuse.
- Keep medications in the container they came in. This prevents any confusion about which pill is which, how much to take & how often to take it.
- Keep a medication log. You will know how much should be remaining in the container at any given time. This may help if you suspect someone is taking your pills, or if you need to call poison control or 911 if you suspect a child took some of the pills or if you experience any confusion about if you took your last dose.

## **Use as directed:**

Take only the recommended dose. If given the option to take the recommended dose only "as needed," then take sparingly. If you or a loved one has any problems with memory or confusion, consider appointing a responsible family member to oversee how the medication is used.

### **Dispose of properly:**

Properly dispose of medications that have expired or are no longer needed. This should be done following the passing of a family member to prevent the unused medication from getting into the wrong hands.

- Do not flush medication down the toilet/sink.
- Do not throw medication away “as is” in the trash.
- If disposing of medication on your own, mix it in with something undesirable (like used cat litter or coffee grinds), then seal prior to adding it to a garbage bag with your other trash.
- Do remove medication labels off of the bottles or cover information with a black marker prior to throwing out prescription medication containers.
- Do use medication take-back programs.
- Do use Deterra kits for safe disposal  
[deterrasystem.com](http://deterrasystem.com) (612) 568-1128

### **Seek help:**

- Call 911 if someone overdoses.
- Call 911 or Poison Control (**800-222-1222**) if a child ingests medication not prescribed for them or takes more than a prescribed dose of medication.
- Call your doctor or pharmacy if you have any questions/concerns about the medication or side-effects.
- Talk to your doctor or call the Access Center (855-996-2264) for help with an addiction.