

UNDERSTANDING TEEN RISK

Why teens experiment:

- Stress and anxiety are top reasons
- Major depressive episodes aren't rare in teens and are increasing
- Peer pressure and curiosity about effects
- Teen brains aren't fully developed and are wired to take risks

Risk factors:

- Not knowing that fake prescription pills exist
- Nicotine use before age 15
- Family history of substance use issues
- Limited knowledge of/access to healthier coping strategies

Be prepared:

- Have naloxone available—it reverses opioid overdoses
- Get trained on overdose recognition and response
- Trust your instincts and seek professional help if you notice concerning behavioral changes

Any community. Any family. Don't assume your child won't try a substance. Overdose victims come from every background and may have no previous drug use history. Share this information with your social networks.

START THE CONVERSATION TODAY

Learn more at:

TheNewDrugTalk.org



Additional resources available:

- Conversation guides
- Educational videos
- Expert advice

*A program from **Song for Charlie**, a family-led nonprofit dedicated to protecting youth from fake prescription pills.*

Questions about mental health or substance use and your child? Talk to your healthcare provider.

SONG FOR CHARLIE'S
**THE NEW
DRUG
TALK**
CONNECT TO PROTECT



PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM FAKE PRESCRIPTION PILLS

Nearly half of teens don't know that fake pills made with fentanyl look exactly like real medications.

Research shows teens trust parents most for drug safety information. Here's how to get the conversation started.

THE NEW REALITY

- Fake prescription pills are widely available
- Sold online, on social media, at the mall and at school
- May be shared with/by friends
- Look exactly like real Adderall, Xanax, Percocet, etc.
- Made with fentanyl and other dangerous chemicals
- Can cause overdose or death in a single pill, single use
- Teens underestimate the risk of experimentation today
- The majority of teen overdose deaths are now caused by fentanyl, mostly due to fake prescription pills

Street drugs like molly/ecstasy/MDMA are also now being made with fentanyl and other dangerous chemicals.

Your teen needs to know:

Any pill not from your doctor or pharmacy can be deadly. All street drugs are riskier than ever before.

BUILD CONNECTION & COMMUNICATE

Your relationship is their strongest protection. What's important is connection, not perfection.

- ASK open **questions** about their world
- CREATE relaxed opportunities to **talk**
- VALIDATE **feelings** before solving problems
- SHARE family **meals** when possible
- MODEL healthy **stress management**
- LIMIT **alcohol and drug use around kids**
- SET clear family **rules & boundaries**

Why teens take pills:

Many don't find familiar looking pills "scary"—our culture teaches that pills fix problems. But with dangerous chemicals now hidden in fake prescription pills, **we must help kids understand these new risks.**

Start conversations early and keep them going.

AGE-APPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONS

Elementary Age:

- "Medicine is only from doctors and parents/caregivers"
- Talk about feelings and healthy ways to handle stress, like exercise, talking with friends and time outdoors
- Model good stress management

Middle School:

- Explain that fake prescription pills look exactly like real ones
- Ask about their world without pressure
- Know where they are and who they're with
- Validate feelings before solving problems

High School:

- Have frequent short conversations, not lectures
- Set clear expectations about substance use
- Share family history of substance use (alcoholism or diagnosed substance use disorders), if applicable
- Encourage also talking to professionals (doctors, therapists, counselors) about questions and concerns

Remember:

Protective conversations can start at any age— younger than you might think.

