

Assessing Prescription Drug Abuse

Four Simple Questions for You and Your Health Care Provider *

- Have you ever felt the need to Cut down on your use of prescription drugs?
- Have you ever felt Annoyed by remarks your friends or loved ones made about your use of prescription drugs?
- Have you ever felt Guilty or remorseful about your use of prescription drugs?
- Have you Ever used prescription drugs as a way to "get going" or to "calm down?"

*Adapted from Ewing, J.A. "Detecting Alcoholism: The CAGE Questionnaire." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 252(14):1905-1907, 1984.

*If you need
immediate assistance,
contact the
Kansas SRS 24
hour help line at
866-645-8216*

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Resources

24 Hour Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services:
(866) 645-8216

Kansas Addiction and Preventive Services:
<http://www.srs.ks.gov>

Narcotics Anonymous:
www.na.org

Alcoholics Anonymous:
www.aa.org

HELPGUIDE.org:
www.helpguide.org

Al-Anon/Alateen:
<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator:
<http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA):
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/nidamed/screening>

**Institute for Research, Education & Training in
Addictions (IRETA):**
<http://www.ireta.org>



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K-TRACS

Kansas Tracking and Reporting
of Controlled Substances

How K-TRACS Helps Fight Against Prescription Drug Abuse

Information for the Public

Misuse, abuse, and illegal sale of prescription drugs are some of the most serious threats to the health and safety of Kansas citizens.

The Kansas Tracking and Reporting of Controlled Substances (K-TRACS) system tracks prescriptions for controlled substances and drugs of concern within the state. The goal of the K-TRACS program is to improve pain management and reduce diversion by giving prescribers and dispensers access to controlled substances claims history for their individual patients. All prescribers and dispensers will have access to accurate and timely prescription history data to help determine appropriate medical treatment and interventions. In addition, the data may help identify patients who could potentially benefit from referral to a pain-management specialist or those who are at risk for addiction and may be in need of substance abuse treatment.

This brochure is to inform you about the signs and symptoms of prescription drug abuse, provide information on where you or a loved one can receive help, and describe how K-TRACS is used in the fight against prescription drug abuse.

What is prescription drug abuse?

Although most people use medications as directed, abuse of and addiction to prescription drugs are public health problems for many Kansans. Addiction rarely occurs among those who use pain relievers, depressants, or stimulants as prescribed; however, the risk for addiction exists when these medications are used in ways other than as prescribed. Health care providers such as primary care physicians, nurse practitioners and pharmacists as well as patients can all play a role in preventing and detecting prescription drug abuse.

What are the effects of prescription drug abuse?

Prescription drug abuse often causes serious short and long term medical effects which can include:

- Dangerously increased heart rate and blood pressure.
- Hepatitis or AIDS through shared needles.
- Violent, erratic or paranoid behavior and hallucinations.
- Clinical depression.
- Sleeplessness and tremors.
- Liver, lung and kidney impairment.
- Sudden death (from overdose, heart attack or stroke).

Where can you get help for yourself or a loved one?

If you feel that you or a loved one may be a victim of prescription drug abuse or addiction, please speak to a health care provider or contact the **Kansas SRS 24 hour help line number for alcohol and drug abuse services at 1-866-645-8216.**

How can you tell if you or a loved one may be abusing prescription drugs?

As with any disease there are warning signs associated with prescription drug abuse. They typically fall into five categories:

- **Physical:** Fatigue, repeated health complaints, red and glazed eyes, and a lasting cough.
- **Emotional:** Personality change, sudden mood changes, low self-esteem, irritability, irresponsible behavior, poor judgment, depression, general lack of interest.
- **Family:** Starting arguments, breaking rules, withdrawing from the family.
- **School or Work:** Decreased interest, negative attitude, many absences, truancy, visiting many doctors.
- **Social Problems:** New anti-social friends, problems with the law, withdrawal from friends.

How is K-TRACS used to help detect prescription drug addiction?

Health care providers use K-TRACS to help them identify patients who may be abusing prescription drugs. They review the information on the report and if necessary speak to other health care providers who are listed. They do not share the report with other health care providers, the patient or law enforcement. If a health care provider suspects the illegal sale of prescription drugs, they may report their suspicions to law enforcement who may request a K-TRACS report during an investigation.

What causes prescription drug abuse?

People use drugs for many reasons, such as:

- Curiosity or experimentation.
- Peer pressure or desire to be part of a group.
- A sense of relaxation and pleasurable euphoria.
- Numbing effect that helps to ease physical or emotional pain.

Is prescription drug addiction a disease?

YES, addiction is a brain disease typically treated with behavioral intervention, drug treatment, or often a combination.

What can you do to prevent prescription drug abuse?

There are several ways that patients can prevent prescription drug abuse:

- Provide a complete medical history and a description of the reason for any visit to your health care provider.
- Follow the directions for use carefully and learn about the possible effects of a prescribed drug, especially during the first few days while the body is adapting to the medication.
- Be aware of potential interactions with other drugs by reading all information provided by the pharmacist.
- Do not increase or decrease doses or abruptly stop taking a prescription without consulting a health care provider first.
- Never use another person's prescription.