

**Do you know  
What You Have in Your  
Medicine Cabinet ?**



# Do you know What You Have in Your Medicine Cabinet? ?

Most of us would be surprised to do an inventory. You may find that you have accumulated a big collection of prescription drugs that may be expired from quite some time. Like food, all medications have an expiration date to let us know when the medications must be discarded. People need to look through the medicine supply at least twice a year. Sadly, we can discover that our grandchildren and/or their friends might be doing that inventory for us, and taking some of those old pills.

The Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports that more than half of teens who abuse prescription drugs say they get them for free, from the homes of family or friends. Teens who use these drugs to get high can run the risk of addiction, strokes, seizures, comas, and even death.

According to a survey of 50,000 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in more than 400 schools nationwide showed that Oxycontin and Vicodin were prevalent among teen abusers. It also found that 1 in every 14 12th graders—and 1 in every 25 8th graders—abused cough or cold medications fairly recently.

Prescription drug abuse has become a major problem in the U.S. and County health officials say that San Diego is no the exception. San Diego's law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office are seeing an increase in teens and young adults overdosing on OxyContin and similar drugs.

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Alcohol and Drugs Agency (HHSA) has been sponsored several events to promote education and awareness about drug abuse. One of these major events was: The Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Summit PDAPS. The PDAPS conference was to develop a Regional Drug Control Strategy Plans for a blueprint to prevent the problem from escalating, and for reducing prescription drug abuse.

The White House official, David Mineta, deputy director of the office Office of National Drug Control Policy, ONDCP, was appointed by President Obama to come to give the keynote speech. In his speech, the official said data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that the abuse of prescription drugs has become a serious addiction problem in the United States and the rise of cases qualify as epidemic.

"Statistics show that in some states, the second leading cause of death is caused by accidental overdose of prescription drugs, and there are states where it is the leading cause of accidental death." Said David Mineta. "The federal government is monitoring this national problem. The administration of President Barack Obama, is very concerned about this. He set aside funds from the federal budget for fighting and preventing this problem," said the official Mineta. He ended his talk by applauding the efforts of health officials and public safety of San Diego.

"Prescription drugs can be highly addictive and their abuse has the potential to absolutely destroying families, and disable and kill people caught in their grip."

Said Nick Macchione, Director HHSA

The County Supervisors at the direction of Chairwoman Pam Slater-Price, created the Prescription Drug Task Force and has been taking an active role in decreasing the availability of prescription drugs.

"When these drugs get into the wrong hands, will cause abuse, addiction and death," said Supervisor Slater-Price, "Parents who believe their child may have a drug problem should call toll-free County's Access and Crisis Line at 1-800-479-3339".

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Alcohol and Drugs Agency (HHSA) and Law enforcement agencies are urging people to dump their unused prescriptions.

Medicines play an important role in treating certain conditions and diseases, but they must be taken with care. Unused portions of these medicines must be disposed of properly to avoid harm. If there's any chance that you have stockpiled of unused and expired pills.

**You can't wait longer.  
You must clean out  
that cabinet.**

Certain medicines may be especially harmful and, in some cases, fatal in a single dose if they are used by someone other than the person the medicine was prescribed for. For this reason, never give medications to friends. Doctors prescribe drugs based on a person's physical exam, specific symptoms and medical history.

For more information call San Diego Police Department Safe Prescription Drug Drop-Off program please call Southeastern Division (619) 527-3500 or Northwestern Division (858) 523-7000



*Foto: Oxy Task Force of San Diego County*