



SIGNS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG DEPENDENCE

Dependence on prescription drugs generally happens over time. It is rare that someone wakes up one morning suddenly dependent on their medication. Many people unintentionally find themselves not able to control their prescription drug use. This is a very dangerous situation that requires professional help and treatment. The good news is that now, more than ever, there is help and there is hope to restore the lives of those addicted to and dependent on prescription drugs.

Here are some signs that you or someone you know may be on a dangerous path of prescription drug dependence:

- You're starting to use your pain medication to feel better, not just ease the pain:** Most people who begin to use prescription pain relievers do so because of pain they received as a result of an accident, surgery, illness or other condition. The shift begins when the person no longer takes the medication because they're in physical pain, but rather because of the positive effects it has on their mood or outlook.
- You're thinking about increasing your dose even though your doctor has not recommended it:** While those who use prescription pain relievers long term for legitimate purposes may need to increase their dose over time because they have built up a tolerance for the drug, the problem starts when you begin venturing outside the recommendations of your physician by using a higher dose than prescribed. For instance, using the medication more often than prescribed or using it conjunction with other drugs to amplify the effects.
- You're starting to take the medication automatically, even though the pain has subsided:** If a person's pain has mostly subsided or their doctor no longer recommends they take it for pain, and yet they continue to do so, it may be a sign that they are taking the drug for something other than pain.
- You're spending more and more time thinking about and getting medication:** How much time are you thinking about your prescription pain relievers? When do you get to take the next dose? When are you due for a refill? If this has become the number one priority instead of doing things you once loved to do, it may be a sign of the beginning of a prescription pain reliever abuse problem.
- You've lost interest in non-drug pain management options:** Even if your doctor suggests non-drug alternatives, such as yoga, for your pain, you have no interest. Instead you prefer the medication to everything else, which is a major red flag.

Close to 6,000 people in Arizona have died of drug overdoses since 2008.
Nearly half involved prescription drugs.

Identifying prescription drug abuse as soon as possible is important. Please call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** if you or someone you know needs help. The line is confidential and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also find local treatment resources at www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov; www.RethinkRxAbuse.org

Feeling overwhelmed with a child's drug problem?
Call the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids Helpline at **1-855-DRUGFREE (1-855-378-4373)**.

