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SIGNS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG ADDICTION

May 24, 2010 | By [Riki Markowitz](#)
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Prescription drugs are medications prescribed to patients to treat medical conditions such as pain, anxiety and disease. Although these drugs are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and benefit patients they are prescribed to, prescription drugs are addictive and dangerous when abused. According to the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, people who abuse prescription drugs before age 16 are at greater risk for dependence later in life.

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DRUG ADDICTION

HelpGuide.org—a website developed by therapists and social workers for the purpose of helping people overcome life's challenges—indicates that signs of prescription drug addiction include tolerance, the need to use more drugs to achieve the same effect; the need to take drugs to avoid withdrawal symptoms; using more drugs than planned, and planning activities around drug use.

Drug Dependence Quiz Identify substance abuse problems Confidential, free online survey TurnToHelp.com

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SYMPTOMS OF WITHDRAWAL

For those who are addicted to prescription drugs, stopping is not as easy as going cold turkey. After taking in certain prescription medications over time, the body becomes dependent on them. Signs that the body needs a drug include nausea, restlessness, insomnia, depression, pain, shaking, sweating and anxiety. It's not uncommon for a person with a drug addiction to have to be under medical supervision to safely stop taking drugs.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DRUG ADDICTION

Drug addiction affects people on a psychological as well as a physical level. People addicted to prescription drugs have changes in personality and attitude. They experience sudden mood swings, irritability and anger. These symptoms can effect behavior and result in attendance problems at work or school; financial problems; change in friends and hobbies; frequent fights, accidents or legal problems.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE ADDICTION

For people who are unsure whether they have an addiction, HelpGuide recommends pondering these questions. Do you feel like you can't stop using drugs? Does using drugs make you feel guilty? Do drugs help you feel calm and relaxed? Do you hide your drug use? More questions posted at HelpGuide.org are posted to help gauge your, or a loved one's, level of addiction. See Resources.

SIGNS OF PRESCRIPTION

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COMMONLY ABUSED DRUGS

The most commonly abused prescription drugs, according to the National Drug Intelligence Center, are opioids, narcotics and pain relievers including OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin and others. Often-abused benzodiazepines, used to reduce stress and anxiety, include Xanax, Klonopin and Ativan. Stimulants popularly abused include Adderall and Ritalin.

WHAT TO DO

People addicted to prescription drugs may want to be evaluated by a doctor before stopping. Certain medications can cause dangerous side effects if abruptly stopped, and long-term addiction can cause medical problems over time. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (see Resources) has a free referral helpline, 800-662-HELP. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is a free recovery program for people who want to stop using drugs. You don't have to be drug free to go to an NA meeting and ask for help.

Addiction Recovery Center Alcohol & Drug Recovery Center Let Us Help: (888) 620-3053! www.TheRecoveryPlace.ne

Help for Son or Daughter? Don't wait for bottom, they need help now. Call 1-877-939-0929 www.alcoholanddrugsrehab.

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REFERENCES

- Above the Influence: Drug Facts
- National Drug Intelligence Center: Prescription Drugs Fast Facts
- Mayo Clinic: Drug Addiction

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