



# Prescription Drug Use, Misuse and Abuse Facts

AWARENESS

WISDOM

RESPECT

**At the Wisdom Meeting and Community Engagement Days in 2012 our people shared their deep concerns about prescription medication misuse and abuse.**

Prescription drug misuse, abuse and addictions are serious and widespread problems in our communities.

We have a willingness to face our problems and use our strengths to get better.

Our community leaders and some physicians know that medicines do not cure or heal spiritual pain.

Some of our people are in pain but we still can carry on.

Some physicians who serve our communities recognize our historical trauma from residential schools.

We are committed to making things better for everyone including our children and grandchildren.



**We are proud of our culture and our traditions and together we can achieve what we want for our next generation**

## The Drug Utilization Prevention & Promotion (DUPP) Project



Treaty 6



Treaty 7



Treaty 8



UNIVERSITY OF  
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MEDICINE

## The Drug Utilization Prevention & Promotion (DUPP) Project



## PRESCRIPTION DRUG AWARENESS

### Words to remember

Health professionals may say the words prescription drug use, misuse and abuse.

#### Prescription Drug Use

This means you are taking the right prescribed medication, the right way and for the right reason that was prescribed to you by your Doctor.

#### Prescription Drug Misuse

This means that you are taking your prescribed medication for the wrong reason than what your Doctor had prescribed for you.

#### Prescription Drug Abuse

This means you are taking yours or someone else's prescribed medication to experience the feelings of a "buzz" or to sell the medication for money.

### Concerns and suffering in our communities

Abuse of prescription medications is the "new alcohol"

Some of our community members of all ages are misusing and abusing prescription medications to get a buzz or change their feelings of sadness, loneliness and emptiness

Newborns are being born with substance dependence or withdrawal

Children are watching and mimicking their parents addictive behaviours

Drugs and alcohol are being left in the open for children to take

Parents are not at home to parent children

Children are being physically and sexually abused

Children are often not being taken to school

Teenagers are using inhalants and engaging in violent behaviours

Young women are bringing drug dealers back from the city into the communities

Non-community individuals are now living in and dealing drugs in some communities

Elders are being manipulated and bullied for their medications

There are high suicide rates by prescription drugs and alcohol overdose

Community members are not getting appropriate medical attention because they are uncomfortable being in physicians' offices when prescription drug dealers are in parking lots and waiting rooms

### NOTES

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## Wellness Points

The misuse of prescription drugs has a devastating effect on individuals, families and communities.

Any medicine can be dangerous if not taken the way it was prescribed in the amount directed.

There are times when it is necessary to prescribe medications. However, some prescription medications have the potential to lead to misuse or abuse if not taken as prescribed.

Sharing medicine or mixing medicine with alcohol is always dangerous.

Sometimes medications are prescribed for the wrong reasons and this may lead to more problems or the real issue from being dealt with.

There are many reasons why people abuse medication. Whatever the reason there are alternatives to misusing medication.

Prescription medication does not cure emotional or spiritual pain.

When prescribing medication, often Doctors are doing what they think is best.

If you feel that you or your loved one are being given too many medications by your doctor - act by talking directly to your doctor, share your concern with someone you trust or the call the College of Physician and Surgeons of Alberta at 1 800 661-4689.

## Helpful Community Resources

Someone you trust  
Elder

Spiritual Advisor

Treaty Wellness Consultant 6

Treaty Wellness Consultant 7

Treaty Wellness Consultant 8

NNADAP Worker

Doctor or Registered Nurse

Psychiatrist or Psychologist

Social Worker

Counselor or Mental Health Worker

### What is the DUPP Project?

The Chiefs acknowledge that prescription drug abuse is a concern for all of the Alberta Region First Nation Communities. The Chiefs recognize prescription drug misuse and abuse is negatively affecting the health and well being of the Peoples of Treaties No. 6, 7 and 8 (Alberta). This project was approved by Alberta First Nations Health Co-management Chiefs to use a three-pronged approach to address issues of misuse and abuse of prescription drugs, particularly opiates and benzodiazepines within First Nation communities. A major facet of the project, developed by the Alberta First Nations Co-Management Mental Health and Addictions Subcommittee, was the development and delivery of an educational component, based on community engagement. The initiative involved five First Nation communities. The Drug Utilization Prevention & Promotion (DUPP) Project resulted from concerns identified in the 1997 Auditor General's Report.

## The Drug Utilization Prevention & Promotion (DUPP) Project



Treaty 6



Treaty 7



Treaty 8



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## Answering the First Nation Communities Questions About Prescription Drug Use, Misuse and Abuse

resties  
mogies

candy  
perc's  
oxy

bennies  
dilly's  
b's

dime's  
dimetabs

WHEN YOU HEAR THESE WORDS REMEMBER  
EVERY MEDICATION HAS A GOOD OR PROPER USE

What are the medications that are most commonly misused?

- opioids or narcotics
- Tylenol #3 and Tylenol #4 are examples of opioids or narcotics
- benzodiazepines
- Valium and Ativan are examples of benzodiazepines

Why do people misuse these medications?

- They want to escape physical and emotional pain
- They are suffering from addiction
- They lack the knowledge of alternatives like lifestyle, physiotherapy, counseling and spiritual healing
- These medications are easy to get and can be sold to buy food and clothing
- They are experiencing the negative and damaging impact of residential school

What affect is the misuse of prescription drugs having on First Nation Communities?

- Causes impaired judgment which leads to accidents, uninvolved parenting and workplace issues
- Touches all aspects of the social, emotional and cultural community
- Prevents seeking other sources of treatment
- Affects dealing honestly with real problems

Why do Doctors give people these medications?

- Doctors prescribe medication because most often they have good intentions and want to relieve the suffering of their patient
- Some doctors fail to take the time to understand the problem and are too quick to prescribe a medication for a problem that may need a different treatment
- Many patients have already taken these medications and think that the medication can take away the suffering
- Some doctors may lack the understanding of the underlying factors that influence First Nations health such as the impact of colonization and residential school

## The Drug Utilization Prevention & Promotion (DUPP) Project





**Are these medications always dangerous? What is the right use for these medications?**

**Depression**

Most anti-depressants are safe and non-addictive  
 Other types of treatments like counseling can often be used instead of medications  
 Combining counseling and anti-depressant medications can also be an effective form of treatment  
 The best treatment is always based on a discussion between the doctor and the patient

**Anxiety**

Benzodiazepines may be useful for temporarily helping with anxiety but these medications are addictive and need to be avoided as a long term treatment  
 Many anti-depressants relieve anxiety  
 There are other types of treatment like counseling that are often effective

**Chronic Pain**

Cannot be cured  
 Is difficult for a doctor to assess  
 Patients who are addicted to opioids or narcotics will often tell the doctor they have chronic pain  
 The first treatment for chronic pain is education, non medical therapy and counseling  
 Opioids are used cautiously and only if other treatments don't work

**Acute Pain**

Opioids often play a role for temporary treatment  
 Try to use or 'step down' to safer, less addictive medications as acute pain improves

**Sleeping Pills**

Many of these are safe and not addictive  
 Sometimes anti-depressants are used for sleep  
 While benzodiazepines may be used to help with sleep, they are used with caution because of problems with addiction

**What should I do if I think a doctor is giving out too many medications to me?**

- Ask the doctor why they are giving you so many medications
- Talk to someone you trust about your concern
- Call the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) 1 800 661-4689 if you are not able to resolve conflict with your Doctor

**What can I do if I think a doctor is ordering too many medications for a family member?**

- Talk to the family member and suggest alternatives
- Talk to the doctor
- Talk to another health professional that you trust such as a Registered Nurse, Social Worker, or NNADAP Worker
- If you are unable to talk to or resolve your concern with the doctor call CPSA 1 800 661-4689

**What is being done to stop Doctors from giving too many medications to First Nations people?**

- There are university education programs for physicians
- The CPSA monitors doctor's drug prescribing and gives them feedback
- The DUPP program brings doctors into conversation circles with First Nation communities

**Points to remember**

1. Medicines are usually safe when prescribed and taken as directed by a Doctor
2. Never share your medications with other people
3. If you stop taking your medications or the medication doesn't work then tell your Doctor
4. There are some kinds of pain and suffering that medication can not take away
5. Traditional First Nations healing and community supports can help with cultural suffering

Types of Medication And Slang Words	Most Common and Proper Use	Trade Name	Scientific Name	Characteristics
<b>Opioids or Narcotics</b> perc's oxy candy	for a short period of time with intense or severe pain	Tylenol #3 and #4 Percocet Endocet Oxycontin MS Contin Dilaudid Talwin	Codeine Oxycodone  Morphine Hydromorphone Tentazocine	addictive slows down breathing when mixed with alcohol
<b>Benzodiazepines</b> resties mogies	anxiety seizures muscle relaxants	Valium Xanax Ativan Rivotril Lectopam Restoril Mogadon	Diazepam Alprazolam Lorazepam Clonazepam Bromazepam Temazepam Nitrazepam	addictive works quickly
<b>Anti-depressants</b>	depression, mood problems, anxiety and long lasting pain	Celexa Effexor Paxil Prozac	Citalopram Venlafaxine Paroxetine Fluoxetine	lower potential for abuse takes 4-6 weeks to work
<b>Tricyclic Anti-depressants</b>	depression, anxiety and long lasting pain	Elavil Desyrl	Amitriptyline Trazodone	lower potential for abuse less safe than newer anti-depressants
<b>Anti-inflammatory or NSAID's</b>	for a short period of time with pain or for long lasting pain and inflammation	Advil Aleve Naprosyn Celebrex Voltaren	Ibuprofen Naproxen Naproxen Celecoxib Diclofenac	can hurt the kidney and stomach
<b>Non Opioid Medication - sometimes used for pain</b>	chronic pain from nerve irritation	Neurontin Lyrica Flexeril	Gabapentin Pregabalin Cyclobenzaprine	reduces but does not cure pain can cause sleepiness
<b>Stimulants</b>	attention deficit disorder	Ritalin Dexedrine Adderal	Methylphenidate Dextroamphetamine Amphetamine/ dextroamphetamine	habit forming dangerous to heart
<b>Medications you can buy without a prescription</b> dimetabs dime's	for nausea and vomiting and motion sickness	Gravol	Dimenhydrinate	causes sleepiness



## Stimulant Drugs

These drugs act on your brain to calm your behaviour and help you with better thinking.

The most common and proper use of these medications are for treating Attention Deficit Disorder.

These medications can be harmful to your heart.

Uppers or R's are highly addictive and may be abused.



Ritalin



Dexedrine



Adderall

## The Path to Spiritual Wellness



### Help change denial in your community

This means facing the fact there is prescription drug misuse and abuse in our community even though it is uncomfortable to accept this truth.



### Help share awareness of the problem and challenges we are facing

This means you are willing to talk honestly to each other about the real issues you may be facing with your family and friends.



### Help create and participate in an action plan

This means you are committed to working with other community members to support healthy choices and decision making.



## PRESCRIPTION DRUG AWARENESS

### 'Narcotic' or 'Opioid' Drugs

This group of drugs has either a natural or chemical in them called opioid. These drugs can dull the sense of pain, slow down your breathing and cause drowsiness or make you sleepy.

The most common and proper use of this medication is for a short period of time with intense or severe pain.

Candy, OXY and PERC's are highly addictive.



Tylenol #3



Tylenol #4



Percocet



Oxycontin



M.O.S



MS Contin



Codeine



Oxycodone



Morphine

### Benzodiazepine Drugs

This group of drugs acts on your brain to help you with feelings of worry, restlessness, muscle tension and troubled thinking.

The most common and proper use of this medication is for temporary help with anxiety, muscle relaxants, promotion of sleep, and preventions of seizures.

Benzo's or Bennies are highly addictive.



Valium



Xanax



Clonazepam



Ativan



## Sleep Drugs

These drugs act on your brain to help you get a healthy nights sleep.

The most common and proper use of these medications are to help you get to sleep and stay asleep.

These drugs must be used with caution and can be addictive.

## Newer Anti-depressant Drugs

These drugs act on your brain to help you with depression, anxiety and long lasting pain.

The most common and proper use of these medications are to treat overwhelming feelings of sadness or negative thoughts.

These types of drugs take 4-6 weeks to help a person to start feeling better.

These drugs usually have fewer side effects than 'older' anti-depressants.



Celexa



Effexor



Paxil



Prozac

## Tricyclic Anti-depressant Drugs

These kinds of drugs are a little bit different from other anti-depressants because they make your body sleepy.

The most common and proper use of these medications are for feelings of depression, anxiety and long lasting pain.



Elavil  
Amitriptyline



Desyrl  
Trazadon



## Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

These drugs act on your brain and help reduce the physical swelling and pain from an injury

The most common and proper use of these medications are for temporary pain relief of a physical injury.

These types of drugs may hurt your stomach or kidneys.



Aspirin



Ibuprofen  
Advil



Naprosyn



Voltaren

Over the counter

Need a Doctor's prescription

## Non Opioid Pain Drugs

These drugs act on your brain to help you with constant nerve pain.

The most common and proper use of these medications are to help manage physical pain that never goes away.

While chronic pain drugs can treat chronic pain, Doctors can use other medications and other non-medical therapies for the first line of treatment.

Chronic pain cannot be cured.



Neurontin  
Gabapentin



Flexeril  
Cyclobenzaprine