

# POTENTIAL FOR NONMEDICAL USE AND DIVERSION OF PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT MEDICATIONS

Prescription stimulant medications, such as amfetamines and methylphenidate, are often prescribed for the treatment of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

As with all prescription medications, proper use of stimulant medications is important. Stimulant medications can cause a number of possible side effects if not used correctly; for example, if taken at high doses or used when not prescribed they can cause serious health consequences.

It is important to handle prescription stimulant medications in a serious manner. They should never be sold or given away to other people.

## Improper use of stimulant medication

The improper use of stimulant medications can include nonmedical use and diversion:

### Nonmedical use

#### **Misuse**

Misuse describes any time that a prescription medication is used in a way other than the one prescribed; for example, someone taking an extra dose of their own medication or not taking doses as prescribed.

#### **Abuse**

Abuse means someone using a prescription medication to change the way they feel; for example to get 'high'. This can be dangerous for the person taking the medication and for those around that person.

### Diversion

Diversion describes the removal of medication, prescribed to treat a patient's medical condition, from its intended use. For example, someone giving their prescription medication or their child's prescription medication to someone else.

#### ***If your child has been prescribed stimulant medications you should...***

- ✔ Understand as much as possible about your child's treatment with stimulant medications
- ✔ Keep your child's medication in a safe place, including at school
- ✔ Be aware of how much medication your child is taking and how often. Ensure that your child only takes stimulant medications as prescribed for them
- ✔ Talk to your child about their medication regularly, including the dangers of using it improperly and the laws relating to someone else using their medication
- ✔ Make sure no one else uses your child's stimulant medication. This can be done by counting their pills regularly
- ✔ Discuss the dangers of improper use of stimulant medications with your family and your child's doctor
- ✔ Be aware of any unusual signs that might indicate that your child is using their medication improperly. Your child's doctor can advise you as to the type of signs to look out for
- ✔ Talk to your child's doctor immediately if you are concerned about any of these issues

#### ***If you have been prescribed stimulant medications you should...***

- ✔ Understand as much as possible about your treatment with stimulant medications
- ✔ Keep your medication in a safe place, even when you are at school or college
- ✔ Be aware of how much medication you should be taking and how often
- ✔ Only take your stimulant medication in the way your doctor prescribed
- ✔ Make sure no one else uses your stimulant medication. This can be done by counting your pills regularly
- ✔ Talk to your doctor straight away if you are worried about anything relating to your medication