



2016 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey

Data Brief: Prescription Drugs and Opiates

In fall 2016, over 230,000 students participated in the Healthy Youth Survey. Over 1,000 schools administered the survey, representing all 39 Washington counties and 236 school districts.

Misuse of prescription drugs and use of pain relievers to get high remained stable between 2014 and 2016.

- The percentage of students using prescription drugs not prescribed to them in 2016:
 - 8th grade – 5%
 - 10th grade – 8%
 - 12th grade – 9%
- The percentage of students using pain killers to get high in 2016:
 - 8th grade – 2%
 - 10th grade – 4%
 - 12th grade – 5%

The percentage reporting any use of heroin in their lifetime has also remained steady between 2014 and 2016.

- The percentage of students reporting they had ever used heroin in 2016 are:
 - 8th grade – 3%
 - 10th grade – 4%
 - 12th grade – 4%

Though about two-thirds of teens (8th, 10th, and 12th graders) perceive prescription drug misuse to carry great risk of harm, almost one in 10 believes it to have little to no risk.

- These rates were stable between 2014 and 2016.

Most teens report their parents feel it is very wrong to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them.

- Over 80% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders say their parents think it is very wrong, while 4-6% say their parents think it is not wrong or just a little wrong. The rates were mostly stable from 2014 to 2016.

Use of opioids is a serious concern, with a very high risk of addiction, injury, and even death.

- These percentages mean that in 2016, about 3,621 Washington State 12th graders had tried heroin at least once in their lifetime and even more (about 4,526) use pain killers to get high in any given month.

State, local, and community prevention efforts are crucial for addressing teen opioid misuse.

- To learn about statewide substance use prevention program strategies, visit TheAthenaForum.org/SPEplan.
- Find out what you can do at medicineabuseproject.org and visit takebackyourmeds.org to find medication take-back locations across Washington State.

For more Healthy Youth Survey fact sheets and reports, visit www.AskHYS.net.

