



2018 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey Data Brief: Prescription Drugs and Opiates

In fall 2018, over 230,000 students participated in the Healthy Youth Survey. Over 900 schools administered the survey, representing all 39 Washington counties and 228 school districts.

Misuse of prescription drugs and use of pain relievers to get high decreased among 12th graders and remained stable for 8th and 10th graders between 2016 and 2018.

- The percentage of students using prescription drugs not prescribed to them in 2018:
 - 8th grade – 6%
 - 10th grade – 7%
 - 12th grade – 7% (decreased from 9% in 2016)
- The percentage of students using pain killers to get high in 2018:
 - 8th grade – 2%
 - 10th grade – 4%
 - 12th grade – 4% (decreased from 5% in 2016)

The percentage reporting any use of heroin in their lifetime decrease among 8th graders and remained steady for 10th and 12th graders between 2016 and 2018.

- The percentage of students reporting they had ever used heroin in 2018 are:
 - 8th grade – 2% (decreased from 3% in 2016)
 - 10th grade – 3%
 - 12th grade – 3%

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

- These percentages mean that in 2018, about 2,500 Washington State 12th graders had tried heroin at least once in their lifetime and even more (about 3,500) use pain killers to get high in any given month.

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.

- 10th graders perception of great risk of harm decreased, while their perception of little to no risk increased from 2016 to 2018.

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

- Over 80 percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders say their parents think it is very wrong, while 5 percent say their parents think it is not wrong or just a little wrong.

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.