



Prevention Treatment and Outreach NATIONAL GUARD

WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

DANGERS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

In a recent story posted in the August edition of the *Army Time*, it was reported that on average, once every five days, an Active Duty service member is found dead from an accidental drug or alcohol overdose. This number has nearly tripled from 2001, and from this time until 2009, at least 430 troops have died from drug use.

The story also reported that at least one-third of these accidental

deaths were caused by some sort of narcotic painkiller, with methadone topping the list. Narcotic painkillers are derived from the family of opioids. When opioids are used in



high doses, or when mixed with alcohol and/or other drugs this can cause the nervous system to slow down

and can at times be fatal.

The article also reported that approximately one-third of all soldiers are taking a prescription medication, and one in seven of the entire Army population currently has a prescription for an opiate pain killer. They also suggested that the spike in prescription-drug use could be a result of the many of thousands of physically and mentally wounded returning

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SPOOKY STATISTICS

- 1 in 4 Soldiers admit abusing prescription drugs
- 15% of Soldiers admit they have abused prescription drugs in the past 30 days
- Nearly one-third of Army suicides involve prescription drugs
- At least 430 troops have died from drug use during the past decade

DANGERS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS CONT.

could be a result of the many of thousands of physically and mentally wounded returning from war over the past decade.

When using prescription drugs it is important to ensure that they are used only in ways intended by the prescribing doctor and are used only for specified medical purposes. Taking a friend's prescription painkiller for your backache or disrupt the time-release formula of a drug is considered abuse. It's important to never crush, snort, chew or dissolve the pills.

During fiscal year 2009, the West Virginia Army National Guard had a total of 75 positives, while over 61% of these positives were THC (marijuana), 35% of the positives were prescription drugs.

It is essential that you ensure your prescription is current while taking the medication (check expiration dates before taking an older medication). Soldiers who test positive for these drugs will have their medical records reviewed and possibly be interviewed by the Medical Review Officer (MRO).

It is important for you to remember that if you or a loved one are abusing prescription drugs, resources are available. Your state's Prevention Coordinator can locate treatment based on your location, and sometimes can even find financial assistance to cover your cost. *As a soldier you can seek help from your Unit, Medical Office, or by contacting the Prevention, Treatment and Outreach (PTO) office. When admitting drug use, before knowing of a test, a soldier may be covered by the Limited Use Policy.*



RESPONSIBLE DRINKING

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, you may have a problem with alcohol:

- Do you drink alone when you feel angry or sad?
- Does your drinking ever make you late for work?
- Does your drinking worry your family?
- Do you ever forget what you did while drinking?
- Do you get headaches or have a hangover after drinking?

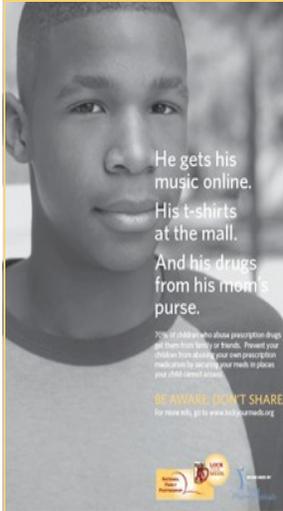


Remember, **It is ALWAYS ok not to drink, but if you do, DRINK RESPONSIBLY and think before you drink!**

A strong positive mental attitude will create more miracles than any wonder drug.

Patricia Neal

LOCK IT UP



Did you know you could be your loved one's unwitting drug supplier? According to a survey by SAMHA, more than 4,000 children and young adults begin experimenting with prescription drugs each day. These drugs include pain relievers, depressants, stimulants and over-the-counter (OTC) medicine.

It's estimated that 70% of these drugs are obtained from friends and family. They are taken each day from your medicine cabinet, nightstand or your kitchen counter. Because these medications were prescribed by a doctor, adolescents believe that these drugs are safe. When asked,

teens report that they often abuse to relieve depression and anxiety and to help cope with life stresses.

So why should you be concerned? Well, according to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, it was reported that 20,950 people died from an overdose of prescription drugs between 1999 and 2004. The 62% increase is more than cocaine and heroin combined.

So this year, the National Family Partnership is asking you to **Be Aware. Don't Share.**

HELPFUL RESOURCES

West Virginia Chaplains
Chaplin Reed, 561-6238
bruce.reed1@us.army.mil

Chaplin Coffey, 561-6490
gary.coffey@us.army.mil

State Family Program Director, MAJ Martin
james.a.martin2@us.army.mil

Director of Psychological Health
elizabeth.coffey@us.army.mil

Military Family Life Consultant
donna.cooke1@us.army.mil
tina.nibert@us.army.mil

Treatment Locator (SAMHSA)
dasis3.samhsa.gov

Military One Source
www.militaryonesource.com

Veterans' Affairs
www.va.gov

Vet Center
www.vetcenter.va.gov

Alcohol Use Self-Assessment
www.alcoholscreening.org

Drug Use Self-Assessment
www.drugscreening.org

12-Step/Support Programs – AA

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

12 Step/Support Programs – NA www.na.org

THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE 24-HOUR TOLL FREE SERVICE

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll free suicide prevention service available to anyone in the Military, National Guard, or Veteran with a suicidal crisis. If you need help, please dial 1-800-273-TALK (8255). When prompted, press option 1 to connect to a VA staffed Crisis Center. Your call will be routed to the nearest Crisis Center in your area or you may call 1-800-923-HELP.

The Youth Drug and Suicide Line is 1-877-553-TEEN.

The PTO program is designed to serve National Guard service members and their families. Additionally, outreach services are provided to service members in all components and to their local communities.

UPL TRAINING

The Substance Abuse Program Office will now be offering monthly Unit Prevention Leader UPL training for urinalysis collection. The certification is only valid for 18 months, so it is imperative that refresher courses are completed to keep UPLs current and efficiently trained. Units may contact SSG Miranda Green or SSgt Christina Hammack at 304-201-3102 to inquire.

Below is the schedule for the 1st QTR trainings:

5-Nov-10/Charleston/0900-1200

3-Dec-10/Dawson/0900-1200

<http://www.wv.ngb.army.mil/pto/default.aspx>

CONTACT INFORMATION

PTO

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304-201-3102

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Testing

SSG Miranda Green, NCIOC

Substance Abuse Program Coordinator

304-201-3106

miranda.green@us.army.mil

SSgt Christina Hammack

Substance Abuse Program Coordinator

304-201-3102

christina.n.hammack@us.army.mil

OUR MISSION

To provide prevention training, outreach to military families, and treatment resources to service members in an effort to increase military discipline, individual performance, and combat readiness.

LIMITED USE POLICY

If you or someone you know is abusing alcohol or drugs, it is best to admit the concern to your chain of command so they can help before you get caught. If you admit your abuse and request help, you may be protected from any adverse action taken against you.

Self-referrals are protected under AR600-85. You should contact your chain of command or the PTO (304-201-3102) office for assistance.

