

TOOLBOX TALK #4

THE CRISIS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

The National Safety Council (NSC) states that overdoses – mostly from prescription opioid painkillers such as Vicodin, Oxycontin and morphine – are the leading causes of unintentional death among adults ages 25 – 64. The NSC notes that overprescribing is a serious problem, and that in 2010 “enough prescription painkillers were provided to medicate every American around the clock for one month.”

To help prevent prescription drug abuse:

- Ask your doctor about alternative treatment options besides opioids. Over-the-counter medications are often more effective and offer fewer side effects.
- If you are prescribed opioid painkillers, follow your doctor’s orders exactly and take only what is prescribed for you. Never share prescription medications.
- Keep medicine locked up and away in a medicine cabinet.
- Dispose of medications safely – never flush or throw away these drugs. Visit the Food and Drug Administration’s website for information on safe disposal of drugs.

