

- **Prescriptions and Over-the-Counter Medications**
 - After Marijuana prescriptions and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are the most commonly abused drug by Americans fourteen and older. Medication is often used in a way not intended for use, in amounts not prescribed by a doctor, or taken by someone other than the person for whom was prescribed. The types of drugs most commonly abused are opioid pain relievers like vicodin or oxycontin, medication for treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder like Adderall or Ritalin, and medication for anxiety relief like Valium or Xanax. The most commonly abused medications are cough and cold remedies that contain dextromethorphan. People commonly misconstrue OTC drugs as safer than illicit drugs, however, this is only correct when the drug is used as instructed. When these drugs are abused they can put users at risk for adverse health defects including overdose. (drugabuse)
 - **Uses:** Prescription drugs may be abused by sharing their medication with others, taking the drug in a higher quantity or different manner than prescribed, or taking the drug for a different purpose than originally intended. (drugabuse)
 - **Physical Effects:**
 - **Psychological Effects:** When OTC and prescription drugs are abused they often directly or indirectly create a pleasurable increase in dopamine. When done repeatedly it can lead to addiction. Other effects depend on the drug used. Opioids can result in drowsiness, constipation, and, depending on dosage size, depressed breathing. (drugabuse)
 - **Long-Term Effects:** Along with depressed breathing Opioid drugs can also cause brain damage. Depressed breathing can affect the amount of oxygen that reaches the brain; this is called hypoxia. Hypoxia can cause a coma or permanent damage, along with other psychological and neurological effects. More people die from overdose of Opioid drugs than all other OTC and prescription drugs combined, including heroin and cocaine. (drugabuse)

Source:

Drugabuse [<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts>]