

## “Pharming”—a growing problem

The younger generation calls it “pharming.” This term often refers to offering prescription drugs in a mixing bowl at parties. Pharming can also mean prescription abuse and illegal distribution of prescription drugs. Sadly, the recreational use of prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs is becoming increasingly popular among teenagers.

## A mother’s tragedy

My son Sean was fulfilling his life by working and attending school to achieve his dreams. He was an athlete who played many sports, including hockey and snowboarding. Throughout his life, he was always warned never to trust strangers and never to let anyone pressure him into drinking alcohol or taking drugs. Peer pressure can be a hard thing for teenagers to resist.

After learning that underage drinking and marijuana were the wrong choices, Sean avoided them. But most people have never heard of prescription drugs being used by teenagers for recreational use. Before 2006, I was one of those who had never heard about pharming. As a parent, I had no clue that teenagers often think that these drugs are safe because they’re “just prescriptions.”

While visiting friends, my son used the prescription drug OxyContin for recreational use, and it killed him. My beautiful son, who was full of life and dreams, died on February 27, 2006. Sean was only 19 years old.

The toxicology report showed that opioids were the cause of death. The report also showed that no alcohol, no marijuana, and no other illegal drugs were found in his system. He had crushed one and a half OxyContin pills and snorted the drug. As an occasional user, Sean’s dependency on OxyContin was becoming apparent.

Sean’s death and the similar deaths of many others prove that you don’t have to consume a lot or be a regular user to die from drugs. Fatal reactions can and do happen to first-time or occasional users.

**Many who knew Sean said, “He was the last person I thought would have died from drugs.”**

## Legal drugs are just as dangerous as illegal drugs

The Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) has reported, “While many people are prescribed opioids to treat chronic pain, it can be lethal when consumed in high doses or injected directly into the blood stream. This is increasingly dangerous in persons whose systems are naïve to the drug.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services warns: “The most dangerous prescription pain relievers are those containing drugs known as opioids, such as morphine and codeine. Some common drugs containing these substances include Darvon, Demerol, Dilaudid, OxyContin, Tylenol with Codeine, and Vicodin.”

**Opioids and Morphine Derivatives:** codeine - Empirin with Codeine, Fiorinal with Codeine, Robitussin A-C, Tylenol with Codeine; **fentanyl** - Actiq, Duragesic, Sublimaze; **morphine** - Roxanol, Duramorph; **opium** - Laudanum, Paragoric; **oxycodone** - Tylox, OxyContin, Percodan, Percocet; **meperidine** - Demerol, Meperidine hydrochloride; **hydrocodone** - Vicodin, Lortab, Lorcet; **hydromorphone** - Dilaudid; **propoxyphene** - Darvon, Darvocet

**Street names:** captain cody, cody, schoolboy (with glutethimide) doors & fours, loads, pancakes and syrup, apache, China girl, China white, dance fever, friend, goodfella, jackpot, murder 8, TNT, tango, cash, M, Miss Emma, monkey, white stuff, big O, black stuff, block, gum , hop, ac/dc, coties, demmies, dillies, hillbilly heroin, o.c., oxy, oxycotton, oxy coffin, oxy 80s, oxycet, pain killer, percs, juice, and vics

One of the most powerful and dangerous prescription drugs is OxyContin. One 80 mg of OxyContin pill has the same amount of oxycodone as 16 Percocet pills.

Opioids are used to treat moderate to severe pain. These drugs are very helpful to people with cancer, severe arthritis, severe back pain, injuries, or other problems. But they are addictive and potentially deadly when misused.

*Misusing opioids can lead to addiction, anxiety, respiratory depression and arrest, nausea or vomiting, seizures, unconsciousness, paralysis, tremors, coma, other health consequences, and death.*

**Depressants:** barbiturates – Amytal, Nembutal, Seconal, Phenobarbital; **benzodiazepines** – Ativan, Halcion, Librium, Valium, Xanax; **flunitrazepam** – Rohypnol

**Street names:** barbs, benzos, reds, red birds, phennies, tooles, yellows, yellow jackets, candy, downers, sleeping pills, tranks, forget-pill, Mexican Valium, snorted R2, Roche, roofies, roofinol, rope, rophies, xanies, xani-bars, xani-bombs.

Depressants are prescribed for anxiety, sleep problems, panic attacks, acute stress reaction, and tension.

*Misusing depressants can lead to addiction, slowed heart rate and respiration, high fever, slurred speech, poor coordination, confusion, slowed breathing, seizures, other health consequences, and death.*

**Stimulants:** amphetamines – Biphedamine, Dexedrine; cocaine – Cocaine hydrochloride; **methamphetamine** – Desoxyn; **methylphenidate** – Ritalin.

**Street names:** bennies, black beauties, crosses, hearts, LA turnaround, speed, truck drivers, uppers, blow, bump, C, candy, Charlie, coke, crack, flake, rock, snow, toot, chalk, crank, crystal, fire, glass, go fast, ice, meth, speed, JIF, MPH, R-ball, Skippy, the smart drug, vitamin R

Stimulants were originally prescribed to treat asthma, obesity, and neurological disorders. They are now being prescribed for people who have ADHD, depression, and narcolepsy.

*Misusing stimulants can cause brain damage, heart failure, dangerously high body temperatures, memory loss, malnutrition, panic, paranoia, seizures, strokes, tremor, other serious symptoms, and bad breath*

**Anabolic Steroids:** Anadrol, Oxandrin, Durabolin, Depo-Testosterone, Equipoise.

**Street names:** roids, juice

Some doctors prescribe anabolic steroids to patients who lack growth hormones. Anabolic steroids are illegal when used for non-medical purpose;

*Abuse of steroids can cause heart problems, liver cysts and cancer, kidney cancer, prostate cancer, severe acne, greasy hair, baldness, other symptoms, and death.*

**Dissociative Anesthetics:** ketamine – Ketalar SV

**Street names:** cat Valium, K, Special K, vitamin K

Ketamine is commonly used by veterinarians to sedate animals during medical procedures; along with GHB and Rohypnol, ketamine is also one of the drugs known as “date rape” or “predatory” drugs.

*Abuse of ketamine can result in increased heart rate, paralyzed feeling, numbness, delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, and death.*

## **Over-the-Counter Drugs (OTC):**

**dextromethorphan (DXM)** - Corricidin Cough Cold, Alka-Seltzer Plus, Benylin, Dimetapp, NyQuil, Contact, Robitussin, Triaminic, Vicks Formula

**Street names:** dex, DXM, robo, skittles, syrup, triple-C, tussin

*Dangers of DXM abuse include coma, brain damage, liver damage, respiratory distress, heat stroke, and death (from arrested breathing)*

## Prescription and OTC medicines become street drugs

Prescribed and over-the-counter drugs are sometimes taken from medicine cabinets at home. Illegal distribution, also known as “pharming,” is common throughout the United States. Prescription drugs are being sold on the street for \$1 to \$50 a pill, and they are easy to get. Users remove the coating of a pill and grind it in order to snort, chew, or inject the drug for an instant and intense high, but that high may end in death. In addition, injecting drugs increases the risk of AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases.

## Recognize these signs of drug and alcohol abuse

- ❖ Bloodshot eyes
- ❖ Changes in hobbies or other interests
- ❖ Changes in mood or attitudes
- ❖ Changes in sleeping habits
- ❖ Curfew violations
- ❖ Drug paraphernalia
- ❖ Lack of personal grooming
- ❖ Loss of appetite
- ❖ Low energy
- ❖ Missing work/school
- ❖ Runny nose but with no cold or allergies
- ❖ Slurred speech
- ❖ Unexplained weight loss/weight gain
- ❖ Unusual temper outbursts
- ❖ Valuables/money missing from home

## Protect yourself, your family, and your friends

- ❖ Lock up your medicine.
- ❖ Don't take anyone else's prescription medicine.
- ❖ Don't take prescription drugs to get high.
- ❖ Remember that illegal drugs and underage drinking are also dangerous.
- ❖ If at a party or other social function, be aware of what you are drinking. Date rape, or predatory, drugs can easily be slipped into someone's drink.
- ❖ Find out about other deadly activities that are being done to get high, such as huffing & sniffing (inhaling poisons and chemicals), the choking game (fainting game), and binge drinking. Educate yourself about the health consequences and the dangers.

## Recognize these signs of overdose

While Sean was vomiting—one of the signs of overdosing—not one person quickly called for help.

If you are around someone who is overdosing, don't wait! Call for help immediately! Get over being scared; worry about the person who may be dying.

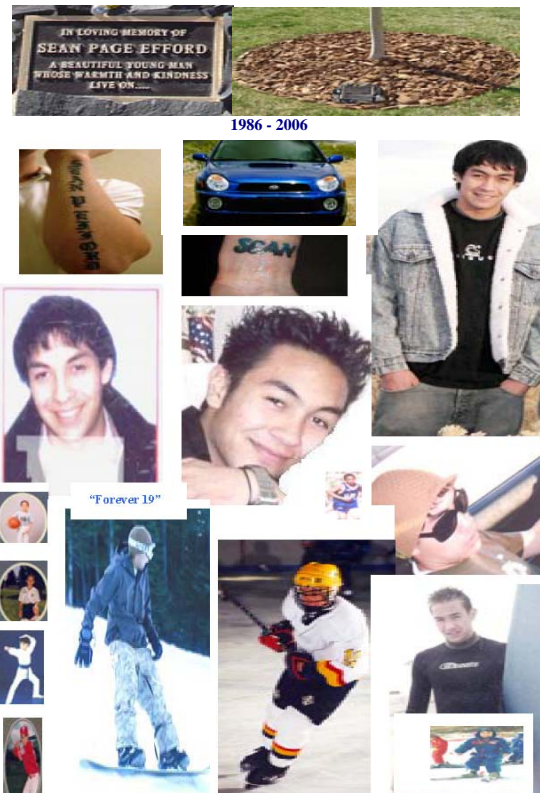
**Remember, friends don't let friends die.**

Some of the signs and symptoms of drug overdose are apathy (lack of interest or concern, being tired, nodding off, or passing out), cold and clammy skin, confusion, dizziness, nausea, seizures, vomiting, weakness, and slow breathing (less than ten breaths a minute indicates truly serious trouble).

### Resources:

[www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov), [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov), [www.merck.com](http://www.merck.com),  
[www.phoenixhouse.org](http://www.phoenixhouse.org),  
[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/),  
[www.streetdrugs.com](http://www.streetdrugs.com), [life.familyeducation.com](http://life.familyeducation.com),  
[www.projectghb.org](http://www.projectghb.org),  
[http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/pressrel/prescription\\_index.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/pressrel/prescription_index.html)

This pamphlet was created to remember those who weren't aware of the dangers of prescription drugs as well as to warn those who are still living.



# Legal but Deadly

## One Mom's Fight Against Prescription Pharming



Written and Created by Lorna Efford  
E-mail: [inmemoryofseanpefford@yahoo.com](mailto:inmemoryofseanpefford@yahoo.com)  
Website: [momagainstprescriptionpharming.com](http://momagainstprescriptionpharming.com)