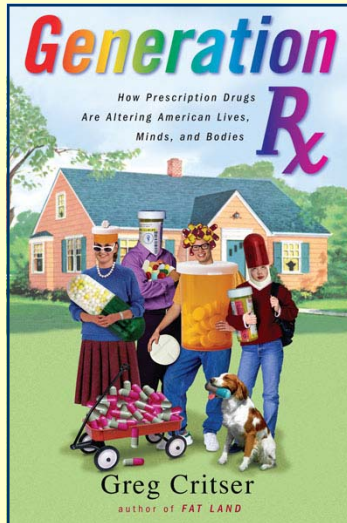




## First-Year Success Series:

### Generation Rx and the Abuse of Medications in a Drug-Taking Society



Greg Critser, the author of *Generation Rx: How Prescription Drugs are Altering American Lives, Minds, and Bodies* (2005, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.), contends that each of us lives within a “tribe” in America’s “Generation Rx.” We have become more and more pharmaceuticalized at every age level. We have come to expect that there is a quick fix for almost any problem. And we are taking prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications at unprecedented rates.

#### **These phenomena have health-related, as well as academic and economic consequences!**

This workshop is designed to engage first-year college students in a discussion relating to the abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications. We will explore the reasons for this abuse, the types of medications most prone to abuse, and the potential consequences of these behaviors. Our goal is to help students adopt healthy medication-taking behaviors, and we especially will seek to discourage the abuse of these potentially-harmful drugs. The workshop will conclude with a discussion of general guidelines for using medications safely and a description of resources for students to help them better understand these issues or to seek help if needed.





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Prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines can be life-saving, they can help alleviate disease symptoms, and they can help prevent diseases from occurring.

However, health problems stemming from even the legitimate use of prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications in terms of patient injury, hospitalizations, and even

deaths are alarming. Research in this area suggests that we spend more in our healthcare system on medication-related problems than on the medicines themselves!

And while drug abuse among our youth has declined in almost every other category, abuse of prescription and OTC medications is on the rise.



Why would college students abuse prescription and OTC medications?

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What types of prescription medications are most prone to abuse?

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Would you consider the abuse of prescription or OTC medications to be a safe alternative to using illicit street drugs?

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What types of over-the-counter medications are most prone to abuse?

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What are the consequences of abusing prescription or OTC medications?

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#### Did you Know?

- Approximately one-fourth of drug-related emergency department admissions are due to the abuse or misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medications.
- It is against federal laws to obtain prescription medications that are not prescribed for you.
- Many prescription medications are just as addicting as illicit drugs.
- The abuse of prescription and OTC medications has doubled in the last decade.

The safest option is choosing to use prescription or over-the-counter medications only for legitimate medical needs under the care of a qualified health professional.





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Should we be concerned about medication-related problems (or “adverse drug events”) if we are using drugs for legitimate purposes?

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What are some general guidelines that you should consider as a health-care consumer for using medications safely?

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#### 4 Ways To Play It Safe With Medicines\*

1. Give your healthcare team important information
2. Get the facts about your medicines
3. Stay with your treatment plan
4. Keep a record of your medicines

\* Your Medicine: Play It Safe, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, National Council on Patient Information and Education, February 2003 (AHRQ Pub. No. 03-0019, [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov))

#### The Generation Rx Initiative

[www.pharmacy.ohio-state.edu/outreach/generation-rx](http://www.pharmacy.ohio-state.edu/outreach/generation-rx)

#### Counseling & Consultation Services

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## The Generation Rx Initiative

