THE TRUTH ABOUT STUDY DRUGS

It’s getting late. You’re losing focus, but that midterm is at 9am, and you’re not nearly done studying. Your roommate has a prescription for Adderall. Before you bum a pill to power through, read on...

Adderall and Ritalin (as well as Concerta, Benzedrine, Vyvanse and Focalin) are most commonly prescribed to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or narcolepsy, but these drugs are often misused as “study drugs” or “smart drugs.” If the prescription wasn’t written for you, it doesn’t work that way. Here’s what you need to know:

As many as 1 in 5 college students has abused prescription stimulants such as Adderall and Ritalin. Although they are helpful for people with ADHD, these drugs are Schedule II controlled substances in the same category of risk and potential for addiction as cocaine, oxycodone, Percocet and Vicodin.

**NOT safe.** People underestimate the risks of using prescription drugs for non-medical reasons. Both short-term and long-term use of Adderall can have side effects including: restlessness, insomnia, nervousness, anxiety, psychological and physical dependence, loss of sex drive, irregular heartbeat and more serious consequences like coma and death.

**Smarter? No.** Prescription stimulants can keep you awake, but studies have found that they do not enhance learning or thinking ability when taken by people who do not actually have ADHD. College students who abuse prescription stimulants tend to have lower GPAs than those who don’t.

**Slippery slope.** Misuse of Adderall can build up a tolerance and lead to seeking out more and other drugs. Students who take prescription drugs for non-medical reasons are at least five more times likely to develop a drug abuse problem than those who don’t.

**Don’t share.** If you have been prescribed Adderall for a medical condition diagnosed by your doctor, use it only as directed. Never share or sell your medication to anyone else. Not only is this illegal, but you may be putting someone else’s life at risk.

If you think you may have a problem with prescription stimulants, or if you are concerned about a friend, check out the [resources here](#), or call the Wellness Exchange 24/7/365 at 212-443-9999

**Sources:**
- [http://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/commonly-abused-drugs-charts-0#prescription-stimulants](http://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/commonly-abused-drugs-charts-0#prescription-stimulants)