

# ALERT!

## “Smart” Drugs



Ritalin

**P**RESCRIPTION drugs intended to treat problems such as narcolepsy, ADD (attention deficit disorder), and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder) are being abused on college campuses and in high schools nationwide. These so-called “smart drugs” or “study drugs” are commonly abused by students as a way to help them get an edge in their schoolwork and increase their academic achievement. Somewhat less frequently, they are also being abused as a way to get high.

Adderall, Dexedrine, Ritalin, and Concerta are four of the primary “study drugs”. Adderall is typically the most widely used and abused. Slang terms or street names for these drugs may include: “Addy”, “Amps”, “Ben-nies”, “Vitamin R”, “Dex”, “Dexies”, “Roses”, “Kiddie Cocaine”, “Uppers”, “Smarties”, “Kibbles and Bits”, “West Coast”, “Pineapple”, and “Skippy”.

These prescription stimulants are classified as Schedule II substances (putting them in same category as morphine and cocaine) and are in or related to the amphetamine family of drugs. When used as prescribed they are legal. However, selling these drugs, giving them away, or using them without a prescription is not legal and could be considered a felony.

Surveys show that as many as ten percent of students have tried these drugs at least once without a prescription. These drugs are usually swallowed in their pill or capsule form.

They may also be snorted or injected—methods which increase their danger.

Users of “smart drugs” report a noticeable improvement in their concentration and ability to study. The effects can feel like an increase in alertness, attention, and energy along with a sense of euphoria. They might take the drugs to get extra motivation for completing large projects, to help them study for long hours without getting fatigued, or to cram for tests.

Taking a brain-boosting drug that helps concentration and academic performance may sound harmless on the surface. It might even seem like a good idea. But the abuse of prescription drugs is risky and can be deadly. Parents and teens need to understand that when prescribed medications are used to get high or for purposes other than what they are intended, they are every bit as dangerous as “street drugs.” And when prescribed drugs are used by or distributed to individuals without prescriptions, they are every bit as illegal.

Prescription drugs come with risks and side effects—even when they are used as prescribed for legitimate medical purposes. Hundreds and possibly thousands of deaths have been attributed to the “study drugs”, which have been linked to increases in heart failure and lethal seizures. Other complications and side effects of stimulant abuse include: increased blood pressure and heart rate, constricted blood ves-

sels, heart problems, vision problems, and increased blood glucose. Additionally, taking high doses of a stimulant may result in dangerously high body temperatures and cardiovascular complications.

Stimulants can be addictive in that individuals begin to use them compulsively. Taking high doses repeatedly over a short time can lead to feelings of hostility or paranoia. There is also the risk of severe psychological addiction and psychotic episodes (including hallucinations and violent or suicidal thoughts or compulsions).

Abusers who inject the drug risk further complications because insoluble fillers in some tablets can block small blood vessels. They also place themselves at risk of contracting HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other blood-borne viruses. ☹

### SOURCES

[http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/Files/File/DEApillbook\\_1\\_5\\_08.pdf](http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/Files/File/DEApillbook_1_5_08.pdf)

<http://www.justice.gov/dea/concern/m.html>

[http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/states/newsrel/houston\\_genx.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/states/newsrel/houston_genx.pdf)

<http://www.drugfree.org/drug-guide/prescription-stimulants>

<http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs6/6444/index.htm>



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