

THE POWER OF COACHING



Many teens are being prescribed opioids to manage pain following a sports injury. For some, care and rest combined with medication is necessary, but others can end up relying on painkillers. Those teens soon become at risk for medication misuse and abuse. Here are some strategies coaches can use to help keep athletes safe.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE SIGNS

If you suspect something isn't quite right with an athlete, find out what might be going on in their life.

- Ask questions like "What's going on today?" or "Why do you seem so distracted?"
- Know your injured players and ask about recovery
- Don't push to "play through pain"

COMMON SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE

- Fatigue, red or glazed eyes, and repeated health complaints
- Sudden mood changes, including irritability, negative attitude, personality changes, and general lack of interest in hobbies/activities
- Secretiveness and withdrawing from family
- Decreased or obsessive interest in school work

BE A RESOURCE TO PARENTS AND ATHLETES

- Talk with parents about monitoring, safely storing, and disposing of prescription medications at their home.
- Remind parents and your students that there is help within the school. Guidance counselors, school social workers, psychologists, and nurses are on hand to talk with students and lend their support.
- If a parent suspects their teen is abusing drugs, encourage them to get help by contacting **Samaritan CrisisCare at 937-224-4646**

ADD PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- Have parents and athletes sign a Prescription Opioid Misuse Prevention form at the beginning of every sports season.
- Provide information at the time of injury.
- Include a prescription drug abuse policy (along with alcohol, steroids, and illicit substances) as part of the written or verbal code of conduct you have with athletes, and hold athletes accountable.
- Follow through in disciplining any breaks in conduct, even "star" players.

COACH RESOURCES

- Sign up for **Know! TEACHable Moments** <https://preventionactionalliance.org/about/programs/knownow/>
- Schedule a **Youth Mental Health First Aid training for your team** by calling 937-443-0416 or go to: www.mcadamhs.org/trainings_and_events
- Host an informational session for parents and teens using **Parent360RX Action Tool Kit** <http://starttalking.ohio.gov/Schools/Parents360-Rx>
- Explore the **Generation RX** educational modules or schedule a presentation for your team. <https://www.generationrx.org/> Contact Gail Dafler at G.Dafler@gesmv.org, 937-684-0316

Stay current about the prescription drug abuse problem, as well as local efforts to promote drug-free, safe schools. The Montgomery County Prevention Coalition is working on these issues and can help support your efforts. If you are interested in learning more, contact Tristyn Eppley at TEppley@mcadamhs.org or 937-443-0416.