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Red Ribbon Essay
St. Joseph School

Medicine Misuse is Drug Abuse

My throat hurts and my nose is stuffy, making it hard to breathe. My mother gives me some medicine to help me feel better and to get some sleep. My mom knows the right medicine for me and how I should take. I know I can take this pill because a responsible adult gave it to me or a doctor wrote a prescription for me to take. Getting medicine from anyone else can do the opposite of making me feel better. It could kill me.

In the past few years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that every day thousands of children age 12 and older are experimenting with drugs that they take from their parents' medicine cabinet. One statistic from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration states that 70% of children who abuse drugs are abusing prescription medication. They not only take the pills for themselves but also bring them to school and share them with their friends. Children taking adult prescription medication can overdose and become severely sick. Children that don't get sick can be encouraged to continue taking stolen medication. They can also start trying illegal drugs.

Prescription drug abuse can have deadly results. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that between 1999 and 2007, deaths from drugs were the second leading cause of death in the United States. There were more drug-induced deaths than people killed by guns. With doctors writing more prescriptions every year, there are more drugs available in homes. These medicines can be stolen without parents knowing and taken by children who do not understand what the medicine is for or how it might hurt them.

I will never take prescription drugs without a responsible adult or certified doctor telling me it is okay. Medicine is important because it cures illnesses and it alleviates symptoms that make people uncomfortable. It plays an important role in managing health. A healthy me is drug free because I understand how to use medicine appropriately.