



Pill parties

It's a prescription for trouble: teens popping pharmaceutical drugs at parties and mixing them together in what could be deadly combinations. 7's Byron Barnett shows us more on the dangers of pill parties.

Many parents worry when their teen heads off to a party. Will they be mixing up trouble by mixing up drinks? But more and more, kids are doing a different kind of mixing that can be even more dangerous. "Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percosets."

They're raiding the medicine cabinets in their homes, stealing prescription drugs and bringing them to pill parties.

"Valium and Klonopin and Xanax."

They call it pharming, as in pharmaceuticals, where teens grab and swallow handfuls of prescription pills, sometimes right out of a bowl. Most have no idea what drugs they are putting in their mouth.

Nick Levine, 24, started pharming six years ago.

"It was kind of like everywhere I went was a pharming party," Levine said, "I had no sort of regard for the dangers. I would do all of them at once."

Blake Tishler, 17, started popping pills at parties in the 7th grade and soon became an addict.

"I've overdosed," Tishler said. "I was upstairs at my friends house, sleeping over one night, and just throwing up the whole night. With the chills and shakes just trying to get through the night. At that time, I think I was 14 or 15."

Experts say these pill parties are becoming more popular because it's easy for kids to get their hands on prescription drugs.

A staggering 60 percent of teens in the U.S. say they could get prescription medications from their parents' medicine cabinets. And 20 percent of them say they've used those pills to get high.

Of course taking even one pill is dangerous and can be deadly. But doctors say mixing them raises the risk of a killer combo.

"Combinations of things can cause a person to just stop breathing, pass out and stop breathing," **Dr. Richard Falzone**, a child and adolescent psychologist of **McLean Hospital**, said. "Maybe it won't kill them. Maybe it will. But even those kids that are lucky -- sleep it off and get treatment -- often times they suffer permanent brain damage."

To make sure your kids aren't doing this, parents need to become the prescription police. Keep very close track of what medication you have in your home. Keep all prescription pills in a safe place, and if your child is on medication, be sure they are only taking the amount they are prescribed and that they can account for all their pills.

As for Blake and Nick, they have both learned to deal with their addictions, but say they can never completely escape the problems that came from pill parties.