What Are Prescription Drugs?
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- Medications prescribed by doctors
- Intended to treat specific symptoms *when taken properly*
Myth: Prescription drugs are legal, so they must be safer than other non-legal drugs
Fact: Legal Doesn’t Always Mean Safe!
Risks of Prescription Drugs

- Side effects:
  - Headache
  - Nausea
  - Drowsiness
  - etc
Risks of Prescription Drugs

- Side effects
- Overdose
Risks of Prescription Drugs

- Side effects
- Overdose
- Addiction
  - Can occur even when used properly
Vicodin and OxyContin

Prescription Opioids
What are Vicodin and OxyContin?
What is Vicodin?

- Prescribed typically after surgeries for pain
- Hydrocodone + Tylenol
What is OxyContin?

- Brand name for Oxycodone
- Oxycodone is an opioid painkiller
- Typically used for cancer, heart attack, severe burns, bone pain
Opioids

- Opioids bind to opioid receptors in our brain, spinal cord, and gut
- Reduce feelings of pain
- Induce feelings of euphoria
- Many side effects
Opioids

- Include: hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, codeine, heroin, and related drugs
- Our bodies also naturally produce opioids such as Endorphins
What is Considered Prescription Opioid Abuse?

• Taking someone else’s prescriptions
  – To feel extremely happy or relaxed
  – To relieve pain without a doctor’s recommendation and prescription

• Taking your own prescription without adhering to the doctor’s orders
  – Snorting, injecting, chewing, crushing
Side Effects of Vicodin and OxyContin Abuse

• Nausea and vomiting
• Severe mood swings
• Headaches
• Constipation
• Slowed breathing and heartbeat
• Death

• Snorting these drugs and combining them with alcohol are especially dangerous
Addiction and Withdrawal

- Addiction is possible even with correct usage.
- Risk of addiction increases with increased use and abuse.

Symptoms of withdrawal include:
- Muscle aches and pains
- Cramps
- Diarrhea
- Agitation
- Nausea and vomiting
What is Xanax?

- Drug class: benzodiazepine (like valium and ativan)
- Prescribed to treat panic disorder and serious anxiety
How Xanax Works

- Central Nervous System Depressant (slows down the brain)
- Makes GABA neurotransmitter work better
- Produces drowsy/calming effect
Common Side Effects

- loss of interest or pleasure
- unsteadiness, trembling, or other problems with muscle control or coordination
- decreased breathing rate
- changes in patterns and rhythms of speech
- clumsiness or unsteadiness
- difficulty with coordination
- discouragement
- drowsiness
- feeling sad or empty
- irritability
- lack of appetite
- lightheadedness
- relaxed and calm

- slurred speech
- tiredness
- trouble concentrating
- trouble in speaking
- trouble performing routine tasks
- trouble sleeping
- Sleepiness or unusual drowsiness
- unusual tiredness or weakness
- being forgetful
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Mixing with Xanax

- Mixing Xanax with other depressants (alcohol) can be **DEADLY**
Mixing with Xanax

- Mixing Xanax with other depressants (like alcohol) can be **DEADLY**

Heath Ledger: Xanax + prescription opioids
Whitney Houston: Xanax + Alcohol
Anna Nicole Smith: Several benzos + sleeping pills
Withdrawal

- Return of anxiety/panic state (often increased)
- Headaches
- Seizures
- Nausea
Treatment

- Rehab Facility
- Drug abuse counselor