

# Special Topic Resource Pages

## Buying the Pharm: "Sharing" Prescription Medications

Because prescription medications are in such common use, students mistakenly believe that they are harmless. Many prescription medications can be extremely dangerous or lethal when used improperly, when used in combination with other drugs (including drugs also mistakenly assumed to be harmless, such as aspirin, alcohol, or over-the-counter pain medications such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen, or herbal remedies), or when used by someone with an unsuspected, undetected medical condition.

**NEVER GIVE OR SELL PRESCRIPTION DRUGS TO ANOTHER PERSON!  
NEVER TAKE OR BUY PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FROM ANOTHER PERSON!**

This warning applies to all prescription medications. The most common psychiatric prescriptions include mood stabilizers, anti-depressant and anti-anxiety medications, ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder) medications, and anti-psychotic medications. Prescription medications that can be dangerous or lethal if "shared" include but are not limited to the following:

Adderall (detroamphet & amphetamine)	Paxil (paroxetine)
Ambien (zolpidem)	Prozac (fluoxetine)
Ativan (lorazepam)	Risperdal (risperidone)
Buspar (buspirone)	Ritalin (methylphenidate)
Celexa (citaloprim)	Serzone (nefazadone)
Dexedrine (dextro-amphetamine)	Sonata (zalepalon)
Effexor-XR (venlafexine)	Wellbutrin-SR (bupropion)
Klonopin (clonazepam)	Xanax (alprazolam)
Lithium	Zoloft (sertraline)
Depakote (valproic acid)	Zyprexa (olanzapine)

### **IF YOU ARE USING SOMEONE ELSE'S PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS...**

Medications at any dose can be dangerous or lethal. If you take/buy prescription medication from another person, you could have an allergic or idiosyncratic reaction, an interaction with another drug or herbal remedy, long-term neurological or other health damage, or a reaction due to a health condition such as diabetes or heart problems. You cannot predict your reaction to a drug that another person takes safely. That is why many medications are available only by prescription from a medical provider who knows your history and health, and can monitor your condition and reactions to the medication.

The possession or use of prescription drugs that are not prescribed to you are strictly prohibited by law. Legal consequences for the possession and criminal sale of prescription drugs may include fines and imprisonment. University disciplinary action may also be taken which may result in sanctions including, but not limited to, suspension or dismissal from the university.

It is important to ask yourself why you would take such a risk with your health -- perhaps you are experiencing difficulties with mood, stress, motivation/concentration, or lifestyle that can be much better addressed or permanently resolved in some other less dangerous way, for example with counseling/psychotherapy or a legitimate medication that is prescribed uniquely for you.

### **IF YOU ARE GIVING/SELLING YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS MEDICATIONS TO OTHER PEOPLE...**

Your medications have been prescribed for you -- and only you -- by a physician. Medications at any dose can be dangerous or lethal. If you give/sell your medication to another person, that person may have an allergic or idiosyncratic reaction, an interaction with another drug or herbal remedy, long-term neurological or other health damage, or a reaction due to a health condition such as diabetes or heart problems. You cannot predict another person's reaction to a drug that you take safely. You cannot predict your reaction to a drug that another person takes safely.

The private distribution, manufacture and sale of prescription drugs, or the possession or use of prescription drugs that are not prescribed to you, are strictly prohibited by law. Legal consequences for the possession and criminal sale of prescription drugs may include fines and imprisonment. University disciplinary action may also be taken which may result in sanctions including, but not limited to, suspension or dismissal from the university.

If you have extra pills, store them securely or dispose of them in a way that prevents their recovery (such as flushing).

### **IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR OWN OR SOMEONE ELSE'S USE OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION...**

Call for a confidential consultation with a counselor or health care provider:

**American University Counseling Center x3500**  
**American University Student Health Center x3380**

### **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY...**

In a medical or psychological emergency, safety comes first and you should not hesitate to contact help for yourself or another person.

**American University Police -- x3636, 24-hrs/day**  
**Local Emergency Response -- 911, 24-hrs/day**  
**Counseling Center -- x3500 (daytime, non-medical emergencies only)**

In case of emergency in the residence halls, also contact your Resident Director.

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