

# America's Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic



## What is hydrocodone?

Hydrocodone is a narcotic painkiller used to treat moderate to moderately-severe pain. The controlled substance is nearly as addictive as morphine and it is increasingly abused for its opioid effects.

Drugs containing hydrocodone are currently the top-selling controlled substances in the U.S., with over 139 million prescriptions sold in 2010 alone. However, they are also some of the most commonly abused prescription drugs nationwide.

**On January 25, 2013, an expert panel voted 19-10 to recommend that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration reclassify hydrocodone combination products from a Schedule III to Schedule II.**

- Opioid abuse has jumped 287% in 11 years according to the report by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Prescription drug abuse has increased among all demographics.
- 9.3% of Americans, or 23.5 million Americans aged 12 and older, have used hydrocodone for non-medical purposes, according to a 2009 National Survey of Drug Use and Health.
- In 2010, a Monitoring the Future survey reported that 2.7%, 7.7% and 8.0% of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, respectively, used Vicodin non-medically.
- The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found the number of lifetime non-medical hydrocodone users has more than doubled. This number currently exceeds 24 million American users.
- Emergency room visits caused by hydrocodone use rose from 38,000 in 2004 to 115,000 in 2010.
- Police confiscations of hydrocodone-containing pills have increased from 13,659 in 2001 to 44,815 in 2010.
- In 2011, 131 million prescriptions for hydrocodone-containing products were filled for 47 million people. That is enough to give every man, woman and child in this country 24 pills.