

# Prescription Drug Abuse in Utah

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Everyone has heard of celebrities checking into rehab facilities or overdosing on prescription pain medications prescribed by their doctors. But what some may not know is that in the last fourteen years, the number of [prescription drug overdoses in the state of Utah has increased by a staggering 400%](#), from the years of 2000-2014. **According to the Utah Department of Health, from the years of 2012-2014, at least 24 people die every month from prescription related drug overdoses.**

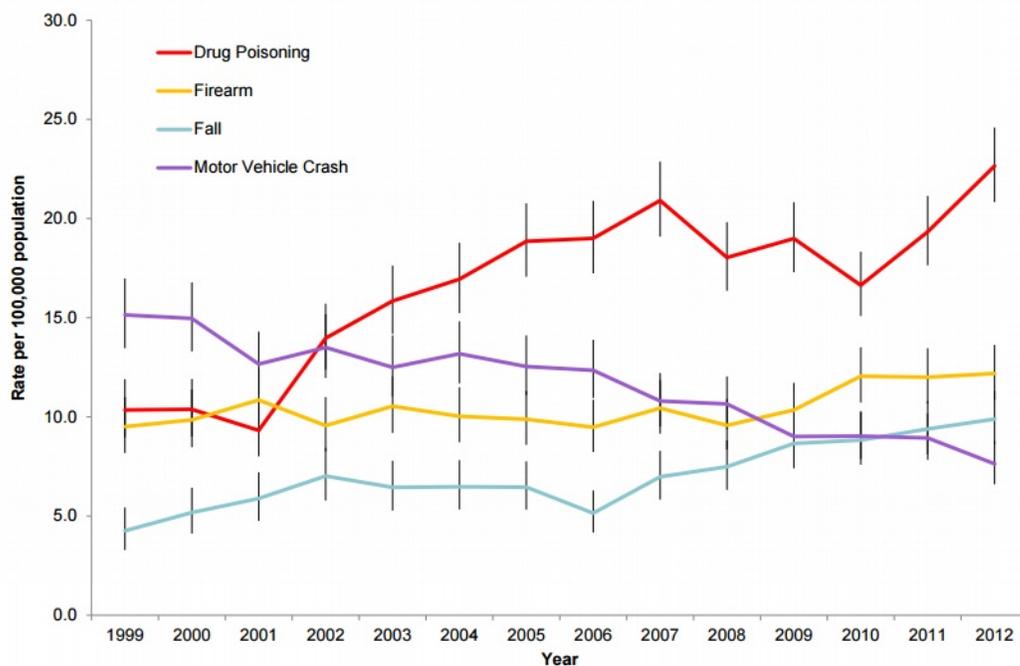
These numbers are high because some people misunderstand that just because a prescription has been provided by a physician, that it is fine for anyone to consume. Unfortunately, that is not the case. **Prescription drugs are meant only for the person for whom the prescription is written.** What's most revealing about these statistics, is that now it is an epidemic in the Mormon community in which tea, coffee, alcohol and other illegal stimulants are prohibited. Prescription drugs are not prohibited, however, and they are being consumed by family members or other community members for whom the prescription was not intended.

## Utah's "Use Only as Directed" Prescription Safety Campaign

Because **Utah is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the country for prescription pain addiction in the country**, the "Use Only as Directed" Prescription Safety Program was introduced to make the citizens of Utah more aware of the epidemic. The purpose of the campaign was also to evaluate how aware people were of the prescription abuse and misuse, and to determine additional ways to acquire information for future efforts.

Over 410 interviews took place over the telephone to Utah residents. Of the households polled, approximately 95% of the people reported that prescription pain medications are being misused. Another 65% of households indicated that they were aware of someone who had abused or misused a prescription pain medication recently. And another 54% indicated that they were not aware of how to properly dispose of expired pain medications.

# Utah Data



Keeping expired medications long past their recommended period of use actually exacerbates the problem. Family members who may have a sudden onset of pain will probably reach for the expired prescription before calling a doctor.

## How to Properly Dispose of Expired Prescription Pain Medications in Utah

The instructions for [how to properly dispose of medications](#) are usually printed on the labels of the medicine bottles or described in the leaflet that accompanies the medication. If neither are available, then consumers located in Utah can take a number of steps to make sure their expired medications do not end up in the wrong hands:

1. Make sure your name and other personal information is scratched off the label or appears unreadable, then dispose of the empty container in your household trash container.
2. Make sure remaining pills are sealed in a container or plastic bag, but do not crush them with indigestible substances such as dirt or used coffee grinds.
3. Take advantage of any programs in your area that will dispose of or take back the unused medications such as any DEA- designated drop box. [See a list of Utah disposal sites here](#).
4. Contact the DEA's Diversion Control Division to locate a drop-off point in your area at 800-882-9539 from 8:30am- 5:50pm EST.

## SAFE DISPOSAL



In 2011, only 26% of Utahns know how to properly dispose of leftover prescription pain medications.



### Treating Utah's Addiction to Pain Medication

Because there is more awareness about the epidemic in Utah, people now have options available for treatment. For instance, the Affordable Care Act in Utah provides treatment options through their health insurance plans for people who may experience an addiction to prescription pain pills. Some judges in the state of Utah are now granting mandatory drug treatment programs instead of jail time.

If you or someone you know, is a victim of [prescription drug addiction](#), a great option to consider is the **Renaissance Ranch Ogden, the drug addiction treatment center in Ogden, Utah**. For a free assessment with our therapeutic team, feel free to call us at 385-222-3737. Our team members can discuss options with you to help you begin your path to a safe and fast recovery from prescription pain medications.