5 Types of Drugs That Are Abused

Though over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs can be abused, it is more likely that prescription drugs – controlled substances in particular – will be abused. Controlled substances (CS) are regulated by the federal Controlled Substances Act (CSA), which divides CS into five categories called schedules.

**Schedule I** drugs have a high potential for abuse and currently have no accepted medical use. They are the only schedule of drug that cannot be prescribed. Examples include heroin and lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD).

**Schedule II** drugs may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence. Examples include morphine, methamphetamine, oxycodone, and methadone.

**Schedule III** drugs may lead to moderate or low physical dependence or high psychological dependence. Examples include anabolic steroids, codeine and hydrocodone with aspirin or Tylenol®, and certain barbiturates.

**Schedule IV** may lead to limited physical dependence or psychological dependence compared with Schedule III drugs. Examples include Valium® and Xanax®.

**Schedule V** drugs have the lowest potential for abuse. They may lead to limited physical dependence or psychological dependence compared with Schedule IV drugs. Cough medicines with codeine are one example.