



Beg, rob, steal -- anything for that OxyContin buzz

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TOLEDO -- The prescription painkiller OxyContin is so addictive that more and more young people are risking their lives to get high, reports News 11's Shelley Brown.

Indeed, experts say addicts will do just about anything to get it. That "just about anything" includes robbing a pharmacy, which happened in Toledo just last month.

Alcohol and drug counselor Glen Witt, explains the thought processes that contribute to the decision to steal and rob to get a fix.

"His grandfather was passing away, and the first thing he thought of was, 'I'm going to get his Percocets so I can turn those over into OxyContin,'" says Witt, who works for Toledo Hospital.

Addicts admit the drug's lure.

"I remember literally saying to myself, 'I just quit,' but I was talking about life," says one person who abused OxyContin. "Financially, I'd gone through just about everything I'd had and then some."

Witt says you'd have to take 10 Vicodins to get the same effect as just one Oxycontin and that one OxyContin pill costs anywhere between \$30 and \$50 on the street.

"If you talk to different kids in the schools they'll know somebody where they can get it or someone who sells it," Witt says. OxyContin is the drug of choice, and it's replacing marijuana and alcohol in Toledo-area suburban schools.

"The long-term effect is you build a tolerance level for it if you take it over time so people take more and more to the point where with excessive use people cannot remember sometimes how many they've taken that day," Witt explains. "And then they take more to the point where your brain tells your body to stop breathing."

The withdrawal effects range from anxiety attacks to muscle and joint pain to abdominal cramping. Witt says addicts can't just walk away from it, that they must seek medical help.

"A doctor has to medically ween someone off of it," Witt says.

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