

# Opioid Information

## Definition

- Information on opioid use.
- Includes facts, myths, health risks, prevention of misuse, and trusted resources.

## Health Information

### Overview

- Opioids are strong prescription medicines used to treat severe pain.
- They can also be misused. People use them to change their mood or feel "high."

### Types of Opioids

- Examples are morphine, fentanyl, oxycodone (Oxycontin, Percocet), methadone, codeine, and hydromorphone (Dilaudid). Heroin is an illegal opioid.
- Fentanyl is mixed in with many street drugs. Examples are methamphetamine, cocaine, and fake prescription medicines sold as oxycodone or Xanax.

### Symptoms

- **Altered mood.** After using opioids, people feel "high." They feel relaxed or sleepy.
- **Physical Symptoms.** Nausea, vomiting, slowed breathing. Pupils are small.

### Opioid Misuse

- **Overdose.** It's possible to overdose on opioids. An opioid overdose can stop breathing and cause death.
- **Addiction.** Frequent opioid use can lead to constantly craving the drug. This is called opioid addiction or opioid use disorder.
- **Withdrawal.** People who use opioids often will have withdrawal symptoms if they stop using them. Symptoms of opioid withdrawal are anxiety, vomiting, diarrhea, sweating, and chills.

## Care Advice

### 1. Key Points

- Opioids are strong prescription medicines for pain. They can be misused.
- There are medicines to stop opioid overdose and treat opioid use disorder.
- It's important to understand the health risks of opioids.
- Here's some information that can help.

### 2. Immediate Health Risks of Using Opioids

- Sleepiness or confusion.
- Shallow or slowed breathing.
- In an overdose, a person can stop breathing and die.

### 3. Long Term Health Risks of Using Opioids

- Opioids are safe if taken as instructed for severe pain for a short time. But opioids are also very addictive.
- Opioid use disorder is when opioid use disrupts a person's life. Using opioids keeps people from doing well in school or work. It causes problems with family and friends.
- There are medicines and therapy to treat opioid use disorder.

#### 4. **Myths About Opioids**

- **"Prescription opioids aren't addictive."** All opioids can be addictive. The more you use them, the more addictive they are.
- **"Trying an opioid to get high once is safe."** It's hard to know how much opioid is in a pill bought off the street. Just one opioid pill could kill you.
- **"I can quit taking opioids easily."** It's hard to stop taking opioids after you start. Addiction happens quickly. You may need help from your doctor or a therapist.
- **"If I take a drug that is an 'upper,' the opioid won't affect me."** Even taken with an "upper" (drugs like amphetamines), opioids can still hurt you. Uppers don't take away the opioid's bad effects.
- **"If I give naloxone (Narcan) to someone, I can make them sicker."** Giving naloxone to someone who overdosed can save their life.

#### 5. **Treating Opioid Overdose with Naloxone (Narcan)**

- Naloxone reverses the dangerous effects of opioids. It's an over-the-counter nasal spray.
- If someone cannot wake up or breathe after taking an opioid, give them naloxone as soon as possible.
- Naloxone will help someone start breathing again after overdose. It will also wake them up. It can save their life.
- Call 911 right after using naloxone.

#### 6. **Accidental Opioid Ingestion in Children: Prevention**

- Only use opioids as prescribed. Don't share them with other people.
- Keep opioids in their original packaging. Store them locked up and out of reach.
- Caution: children can get very sick with just one pill or sip.
- When finished with your prescribed opioid, dispose of leftovers at a pharmacy, hospital, or police station.
- If someone you know has opioid use disorder, get naloxone (Narcan) from your doctor or pharmacy. You may save their life.

#### 7. **Opioids and Teens: Prevention**

- Talk to your teen about opioids. Start discussions before age 14.
- Set clear rules and expectations about drug use. Avoid lecturing or anger.
- Share the risks of using opioids. Remind them it can keep them from doing their best in school and sports. Remind them even one dose can kill.
- Support your teen in making good choices. Let them know it's fine to say no or walk away.
- Talk about ways they can resist peer pressure. Brainstorm or role play with them. Help them find the right words to say no.
- Help them stay away from people and places with opioids. Tell them you will always give them a ride home.
- Talk to your teen about naloxone and where to get it.
- Listen to your teen's questions about opioids. If you can't answer them, use one of the resources below.

#### 8. **Trusted Substance Use Resources**

- **U.S. National Substance Abuse Hotline.** 1-800-662-4357.
- **Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.** Provides a list of addiction treatment helplines. <https://www.ccsa.ca/treatment-support-and-recovery>
- **National Poison Center.** 1-800-222-1222.

## Call Your Doctor If

- You are concerned about your teen's opioid use
- You are concerned about your own opioid use
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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