

Risks of Opioids

What are Opioids?

Prescription opioids are commonly prescribed drugs to help ease the pain after surgery, accidents, or dental procedures.

Misuse of opioids is a leading cause of addiction, overdose and death in the United States.

Heroin is also an opioid drug, which is illegal.

Overdose and Addiction are Real Risks

Opioid drugs are very addictive. They change how your brain works.

If a prescription opioid is taken over time, it can cause tolerance. This means you will need to take more to provide the same effect. This creates risk for overdose.

People who become addicted to opioids may do whatever it takes to get the drug, including getting it in the illegal, Heroin form.

Addiction is not a lack of willpower. It can happen to anyone.

Common prescription opioids include hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, codeine, and fentanyl.

Common brand names are, Vicodin, OxyContin, Norco, Demerol, and Percocet.

If You are Prescribed an Opioid Medication

Take exactly as directed.

Never take higher doses or take another person's prescription.

Do not drive or operate machinery.

Put opioids in a locked drawer or cabinet to prevent misuse by others.

Ask your local pharmacist of how to dispose of unused or expired medication.

Opioid Overdose is a Medical Emergency

Call 911 if you suspect someone has overdosed.

Naloxone is a medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose.

If you have naloxone, administer it according to directions.

If someone you know is misusing prescription opioids or heroin talk to a health care professional about getting help.

Mayer-Lochtefeld, W. (2017). [Pamphlet]. Santa Cruz, CA: Journeyworks Publishing.

