

Sports Injuries and Prescription Painkillers

Understanding Non-medical/Misuse of Prescription Medications

Prescription Medications

- The class of prescription drugs most commonly prescribed for pain is opioids, such as Vicodin, Percocet, Codeine, Demerol or Oxycontin. Under a doctor's orders, these medications can be very helpful. But if used improperly, they can be dangerous.
- Most individuals who misuse prescription medications, particularly teens, believe these substances are safer than illegal drugs because they are prescribed by a doctor. Doctors take into account things like the patient's age, weight, and medical history; the drug's form, dose, and possible side effects; and the potential for addiction, when prescribing medications.
- 70% of people 12 and older who abuse prescription drugs get them from family and friends, and 60% of teens who have abused prescription painkillers have done so before the age of 15.

What is Addiction?

- Addiction is a disease characterized by compulsive drug seeking behavior regardless of the consequences. As the illness progresses, an addicted person needs more of the drug, the illness becomes harder to treat, and the risk of overdose increases.
- Misusing medication can lead to serious consequences including addiction, other substance use, criminal activity, death.
- People who misuse painkillers might not understand how these factors interact and put them at risk for serious negative consequences. Additionally, mixing prescription opioids with alcohol or other drugs is the leading cause of overdose death in Delaware County.

It is important for parents/guardians to be aware of what substances your student athlete may be exposed to or using during the season. What are the signs and symptoms you should look for?

Signs of use

- Anxiety/Irritability
- Insomnia
- Long periods of sleep
- Loss of appetite/nausea
- Watery eyes
- Chills
- Depression
- Disorientation
- Pinpoint pupils

Signs of dependency

- Change in personality
- Social withdrawal
- Change in daily habits
- Neglect responsibilities
- Forgetfulness
- Increased sensitivity
- Change in appearance
- Receiving lower grades
- Increased absence

Signs of overdose*

**If you see any of these signs, consider this an emergency and call 911 immediately.*

- May not awaken when aroused
- Cold, clammy skin
- Blue lips, face, hands
- Struggle for breath
- Elevated body temperature
- Vomiting
- Behaving irrationally/confused

Take Action! What can you do if your athlete is prescribed medication?

1. **Know** → Know what medications your athlete is using and the signs of use, dependency, and overdose.
2. **Monitor** → The adult in the household should maintain possession of the medication and closely monitor the dosage and refills. Although most youth are capable of self-administering over-the-counter painkillers, prescription opiates should be closely supervised by an adult. Set clear rules with your medications! Never share, take more than prescribed, or mix with other drugs.
3. **Talk** → Discuss the dangers of prescription medications with your athlete. Emphasize that just because they are prescribed by a doctor, it does not make them safe!
4. **Lock Your Meds** → Keep all prescription medications locked up to keep your family and friends safe! When the prescription is no longer needed, dispose of the unused medication at any Delaware County Drop Box locations (visit www.co.delaware.pa.us/heroin for locations).

I have reviewed and understand the symptoms and warning signs of prescription drug misuse.

Signature of Student-Athlete

Print Student-Athlete's Name

Date: ___/___/___

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Print Parent/Guardian's Name

Date: ___/___/___



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