

## Ventura Unified School District Prescription Opioids: What You Need to Know

Prescription opioids can be used to help relieve moderate-to-severe pain and are often prescribed following a surgery or injury, or for certain health conditions. These medications can be an important part of treatment but also come with serious risks. It is important to work with your health care provider to make sure you are getting the safest, most effective care.

Prescription opioids carry serious risks of addiction and overdose, especially with prolonged use. An opioid overdose, often marked by slowed breathing, can cause sudden death. The use of prescription opioids can have a number of side effects as well, even when taken as directed.

### Side effects may include one or more of the following:

- Tolerance - meaning you might need to take more of a medication for the same pain relief
- Physical dependence—meaning you have symptoms of withdrawal when a medication is stopped
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation: the most common side effect
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression
- Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy, and strength
- Itching and sweating

### Risks are greater with the following:

- History of drug misuse, substance use disorder, or overdose
- Mental health conditions (such as depression or anxiety)
- Sleep apnea
- Older age (65 years or older)
- Pregnancy

### Unless specifically advised by your health care provider, medications to avoid include:

- Benzodiazepines (such as Xanax or Valium)
- Muscle relaxants (such as Soma or Flexeril)
- Hypnotics (such as Ambien or Lunesta)
- Other prescription opioids
- In addition, avoid alcohol while taking prescription opioids.

**KNOW YOUR OPTIONS**

**Talk to your health care provider about ways to manage your pain that do not involve prescription opioids. Some of these options may actually work better and have fewer risks and side effects. Options may include:**

- Pain relievers such as acetaminophen(Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), and naproxen
- Some medications that are also used for depression or seizures
- Physical therapy and exercise
- Cognitive behavioral therapy, a psychological, goal-directed approach, in which patients learn how to modify physical, behavioral, and emotional triggers of pain and stress.

**IF YOU ARE PRESCRIBED OPIOIDS FOR PAIN:**

- Never take opioids in greater amounts or more often than prescribed.
- Follow up with your primary health care provider within.
  - Work together to create a plan on how to manage your pain.
  - Talk about ways to help manage your pain that don’t involve prescription opioids.
  - Talk about any and all concerns and side effects.
- Help prevent misuse and abuse.
  - Never sell or share prescription opioids.
  - Never use another person’s prescription opioids.
- Store prescription opioids in a secure place and out of reach of others (this may include visitors, children, friends, and family).
- Safely dispose of unused prescription opioids: Find your community drug take-back program or your pharmacy mail-back program, or flush them down the toilet, following guidance from the Food and Drug Administration:  
[www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou](http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou)
- Visit [www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose) to learn about the risks of opioid abuse and overdose.
- If you believe you may be struggling with addiction, tell your health care provider and ask for guidance or call SAMHSA’s National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP.

LEARN MORE:

[www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html)

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Student-athlete Name Printed

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Student-athlete Signature

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Date

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Parent or Legal Guardian Printed

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Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

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Date

Legal References:

California Education Code section 49476