

HOW TO TALK TO A LOVED ONE ABOUT PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS:

- Talk to children and family members about taking **only** medicine that is prescribed to them and to **never** share medications with others.
- Explain that prescription medications are not safer than street drugs and misusing them can lead to addiction and can be life threatening.
- Explain how accidental overdose can occur:
 - Taking more pills or more frequently than prescribed
 - Mixing pills with alcohol or other medications

AVOIDING ADDICTION AND OVERDOSE:

- Discuss with your physician alternative pain medications or other pain treatments to avoid bringing opioids into your home.
- Ask your physician for pain medications that are **not opioids** when non-prescription pain relievers do not work.
- Naloxone (or Narcan) is a medication that reverses the effects of opioids and is effective in preventing death from an overdose, as does rescue breathing.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if Naloxone is right for you or a family member.

Talk to your doctor about treatment for addiction or call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrations national help line: **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or visit www.samhsa.gov

SEEKING TREATMENT FOR ADDICTION:

Opioid addiction may be a biological response to misuse of properly prescribed medications. Please talk to your physician.

Possible treatments include:

- Medication
- Behavioral Therapy
- Inpatient or outpatient therapy

SAFE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF PAIN MEDICATIONS:

- Keep medications hidden safely out of sight. Lock up prescription pain medication in the home.
- Keep a count of all pills to notice if any are missing.
 - Track pills for loved ones who may have difficulty such as a child, adult with memory problems, or a seriously ill person.
- Dispose of all prescription pain medications when they are no longer needed:
 - Use safe local disposal sites and information found at www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback



Prescription Opioid Epidemic: Know the Facts



All material provided in this brochure is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used to replace a consult by a physician, nor the advice of a qualified professional. This brochure was developed as a collaboration between the AMA Alliance and Missouri State University Master of Public Health Program.



PRESCRIPTION OPIOID EPIDEMIC:

One of the fastest growing epidemics in the United States today is prescription pain medication misuse. Opioids, a class of narcotic pain medications prescribed by doctors and filled at pharmacies, are a large contributor to this epidemic. Some examples of opioids are oxycodone, hydrocodone, and fentanyl. While opioids are often medically necessary, misuse, abuse, and addiction are becoming wide spread.

FACTS ABOUT OPIOID ADDICTION IN THE UNITED STATES:

- As of 2016, the estimated death rate due to opioid overdose in the U.S. was 40-52 people a day.
- Prescription opioid misuse can affect all races, ages, economic levels, and genders.
- Over half of people misusing opioid medications report:
 - Obtaining them for free or stealing them from a friend or family member
 - Going to multiple doctors to get multiple prescriptions
 - Filling prescriptions at different pharmacies so that no one will notice how many pills they get each month
- Studies estimate that between 3-19% of people who take prescription pain medications develop an addiction to the pills.
- Risk factors of opioid addiction include previous substance abuse, mental illness, chronic pain, and genetic predisposition.
- Some people think that misusing prescription opioids is safer than “street drugs” because it is a medicine, but that is not true.
- 45% of people who use heroin started with an addiction to prescription opioids.

SIGNS OF ADDICTION:

- Stealing or borrowing pills
- Lying about lost pills to obtain more
- Mood swings—constant irritability
- Forgetting or being distracted
- Stealing money to buy drugs
- Being disruptive to family at home
- Losing a job or failing in school
- Losing motivation or productivity
- Staying away from home overnight or for several days
- Decreased inhibitions—doing things that they typically would not do
- Puncture marks on hands and arms or wearing long sleeves during hot weather to hide arms
- Appearing sedated or lethargic
- Changes in appetite and often sick with flu-like symptoms

SIGNS OF OVERDOSE:

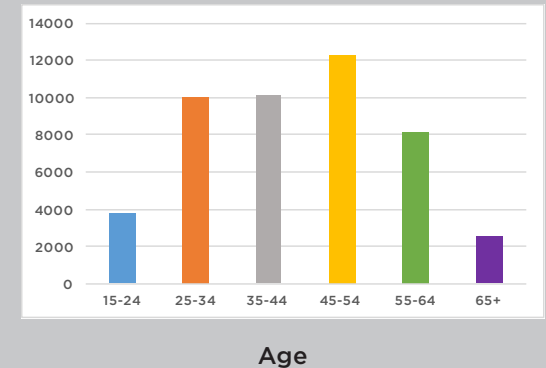
People who take more opioids than are prescribed are at an increased risk for overdose and death. Signs of overdose include:

- Slowed or no breathing
- Unconsciousness
- Confusion
- Nervousness
- Pinpoint pupils
- Clammy skin
- Fatigue
- Seizures



**AT SIGNS OF OVERDOSE,
IMMEDIATELY CALL 911
and administer
Narcan if available.
Perform rescue breathing
until help arrives.**

Opioid Overdose Deaths By Age Group



Data from CDC, 2014

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html>

For questions regarding research included in this brochure and to view our video, please visit:

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