

Take Action to Prevent Addiction

Learn how to reduce risk.



Know the Facts About Opioids

41 PEOPLE DIE EVERY DAY

Every day in the United States, 41 people lose their lives to prescription opioid overdose.

Prescription opioids—like hydrocodone, oxycodone, and morphine—can be prescribed by doctors to treat moderate to severe pain but can have serious risks and side effects.



ANYONE CAN BECOME ADDICTED

Opioids are highly addictive. Research shows that if you use opioids regularly, you may become dependent on them.

That's because opioids change how the brain and nervous system function. **You can't know how your brain will react to opioids before taking them.**

Talk With Your Doctor

Your doctor may talk to you about prescription opioids for pain treatment. Ask about the risks and benefits so that you can work together to decide what is best. You can also ask your doctor to help you find other safer ways to manage pain.

It Only Takes a Little to Lose a Lot

Opioids can be addictive and dangerous.

Risks include misuse, addiction, and overdose.



Opioids affect the part of the brain that controls breathing.

If you take too high a dose, it can slow your breathing and cause death.



Combining opioids with alcohol and other drugs—

like sleeping pills or cough medication **—increases your chances of death.¹**



Start the Conversation

Protect yourself and others by talking about your questions and concerns.



Talk with your doctor.

Ask about nonopioid pain management options, addiction, and overdose risks.

Talk with your loved ones if you're concerned about opioid misuse or addiction.

Let them know that you care about them, and be patient and open when listening so that they feel heard and valued.

Encourage your loved ones to get help if they need it.

Help them look for treatment, and offer to go with them to their first appointment. Your support can make a difference.

Tips to Reduce Risk

Follow these tips to protect yourself and those you care about.



Only take prescription medication that is prescribed to you. **Don't share medication with others.**



Take the medicine as prescribed. Don't use medications in greater amounts, more often, or longer than directed by your doctor.



Dispose of expired or unused prescription opioids.

Remove them from your home as soon as possible to reduce the chance that others will misuse them. To get rid of prescription opioids and other medications safely:

- Check with your pharmacist to see if you can return them to the pharmacy.
- Find a medicine take-back option near you at [takebackday.dea.gov](https://www.takebackday.dea.gov).



Keep medicines in a safe place. It's best to store prescription opioids in a place that can be locked—like a keyed medicine cabinet—to keep them secure from children and visitors.

Treatment Support

For those who might have an opioid use disorder, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP**.

Find opioid treatment options in your state at [goo.gl/Gtkv9C](https://www.gov/gtkv9c).

Learn the signs of a quality treatment center at [goo.gl/X1FCGW](https://www.gov/x1fcgw).

Hear real stories about recovery from prescription opioids at [cdc.gov/RxAwareness](https://www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness).

