

PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS

What Are They?

Prescription opioids can be used to treat moderate-to-severe pain and are often prescribed following surgery or injury, or for health conditions. These medications can be used as part of treatment, but it is important to understand that using them can come with serious risks. It is vital to talk to your healthcare provider to make sure that you are getting the safest, most effective care.

Most common prescription opioids:



- Methadone
- Oxycodone
- Hydrocodone
- Codeine
- Vicodin
- Demerol
- Percocet
- Morphine
- Fentanyl

Signs & Symptoms of Opioid Abuse

- Depression
- Irritability
- Lowered motivation
- Fatigue
- Itching
- Nodding off
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Anxiety attacks
- Euphoria
- Dilated pupils

Risk Factors Are Greater With:

- History of drug abuse
- Genetic predisposition
- Family history of any type of addiction
- Mental health issues (depression, anxiety, personality disorders)
- Environmental conditions (abuse, trauma)

Remember to avoid alcohol when taking pain meds!



Side Effects

- Building up your tolerance – This means you might need to take more of the prescription opioid to feel the same pain relief.
- Physical dependence – Symptoms of withdrawal when the medication is stopped. It increases your sensitivity to pain.
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting and dry mouth
- Low levels of testosterone in men
- Less energy and strength
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression

Overdose Deaths

- From 1999 to 2016, more than 630,000 people have died from a drug overdose.
- In 2016, around 66 percent of the more than 63,600 drug overdose deaths involved an opioid.
- In 2016, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids (including prescription opioids and illegal opioids like heroin and illicitly manufactured fentanyl) was 5 times higher than in 1999.
- On average, 115 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose.
- There is one opiate death every 8.5 minutes.

Alternatives to Pain Meds. Try Other Options First.

Talk to your doctor about ways to manage your pain that do not involve prescription opioids. It is possible that some of these options may work better and have less side effects or risks. Depending on what type of pain you are experiencing, these may be some of your options:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- NASIDs (Aspirin, Motrin, Advil)
- Exercise therapy, including physical therapy
- Medications for depression or seizures
- Interventional therapies (injections)
- Exercise and weight loss
- Cognitive therapy
- Acupuncture and massage
- Mindfulness/meditation

For More Information

- www.mahwahalliance.org

Or

- www.ValleyHealth.com/EmergencyServices.aspx?id=8776

