

What are Opioids?

Opioids, also known as opiates or narcotics, are medications that help relieve pain.

Examples: Painkillers such as hydrocodone (Vicodin, Norco) oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet) hydromorphone (Dilaudid), morphine, codeine, fentanyl, methadone, and tramadol (Ultram). Heroin is also an opioid and is an illegal drug.

Opioids can help manage pain, but they come with many risks. It is very important to take right dose at the right time.

Opioids taken more than prescribed or with alcohol can stop your breathing and cause death.

Opioids taken with street drugs (cocaine, heroin, MDMA, MOLY, etc.) can kill you.

Opioids can make you feel drowsy or confused—causing danger to drive or use machinery.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist:

- Before you take any other meds—including over-the-counter meds, supplements, or home remedies.
- If you have questions or concerns.

Health Risks

Constipation, nausea, vomiting
Death
Decreased bone density
Decreased sex drive
Drowsiness
Heart changes
Sensitivity to pain
Sleep apnea



Opioid Risks

Mental Risks

Confusion
Depression
Impaired judgment
Mental decline
Relationship issues

Functional Risks

Car accidents
Disabilities
Falls
Unable to manage other health issues



Ask Your Provider

- 1 Will the opioids stop my pain?
- 2 How often should I take the opioids?
- 3 Will my other meds interact with my pain meds?
- 4 What side effects might I expect?
- 5 What should I do if I have a side effect?
- 6 What should I do if I forget a dose?
- 7 How long will I need to take opioids?
- 8 Why do I have to do urine screening?

Non-Opioid Options

- Acupuncture
- Chiropractor
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Cold packs
- Counseling
- Exercise
- Heating pads
- Massage
- Meditation
- Physical therapy
- Rehabilitation
- Relaxation training
- Stretching
- Tylenol, Advil, Aleve



Overdose

Signs of overdose

- Slow breath or no breath
- Slow pulse
- Pale or clammy skin
- Vomiting
- Unconscious



Use the “SCARED” steps

- **Stimulate:** Try wake the person.
- **Call 911:** Say location.
 - Is person unconscious?
 - Not breathing?
- **Airway:** Tilt head back and lift chin.
- **Rescue breathing:** Give 1 big breath every 5 seconds.
- **Evaluate:** Can you get the naloxone quickly?
- **Don't leave.**



Find this document at
<http://www.acgov.org/health/indigent/coalition.htm>
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Store and Dispose of Opioids the Right Way



Opioids must be kept in a safe place—they are a risk to your family. Get a lock box to prevent children, teens, and others from taking them. *Spread the Word... One Pill can Kill.*



Opioids prescribed for you cannot be sold or given away—it is against the law. Find safe disposal sites at:

www.acgov.org/medscoalition/

Addiction Resources

Alameda County ACCESS line 1-800-491-9099

BAART Programs 510-533-0800

Berkeley Addiction Treatment Services
510-644-0200

C.U.R.A. 510-713-3202

East Oakland Recovery Center
510-568-2432

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Treatment Referral Helpline
1-800-662-4357 (TDD: 1-800-487-4889)

Treatment facility locators on the Web
www.samhsa.gov/treatment/index.aspx

Taking Your Pain Medications Safely



A Patient's Guide to Using Opioids Safely to Manage Pain