

## **Opioids and the Opioid Epidemic**

### **About opioids:**

Opioids are a type of pain medicine. They can help people manage illness, injury or surgery. Doctors prescribe opioids to reduce pain signals to the brain. All these are opioids:

- Codeine
- Fentanyl
- Hydrocodone
- Morphine
- Oxycodone
- Oxycontin
- Heroin—an illegal kind of opioid

### **Opioids are highly addictive.**

Taking opioids without a medical reason or overusing them can cause addiction--fast. In fact, opioid addiction is an epidemic in the U.S. Every day, about 91 Americans die from opioid overdose, according the CDC (Centers for Disease Control).

### **Taking too many doses of opioids can have dangerous results.**

If your doctor prescribes an opioid medication, take it only as directed. Taking more than your doctor has prescribed can result in:

- Weak breathing
- Constipation
- Blocked pain signals
- Mental confusion
- Nausea
- Organ damage
- Death—**Opioids are so strong, even one large dose can kill you.**

### **How do know if you're depending too much on opioids?**

Watch for these signs:

- You keep raising the dose to control pain
- When you use sing less medicine or quit, you get symptoms of withdrawal like stomach cramps, muscle aches or cold sweats

### **What are the signs of abuse?**

- Using your medicine with other drugs your provider did not order
- Too many refills
- Injecting the medicine or snorting it

Talk to your provider about how opioid medicines can affect you.

**Do you have health questions?**

Call our 24-hour Nurse Advice Line. We are here to help you.

English:

**(888) 275-8750**

Español:

**(866) 648-3537**

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