

PRESCRIPTION PAIN MEDICATION

Prescription pain medication is highly addictive. Even though it is prescribed through a doctor, its misuse is a common concern. Parents should be aware and talk often with their children/teens.

What Is Prescription Pain Medication?

- **Opioids:** oxycodone, morphine, fentanyl, etc.
- **Brand names:** Vicodin, OxyContin, Percocet, etc.
- **Street Names:** Oxy, Percs, etc.

“Misuse” of Prescription Pain Medication

People misuse prescription pain medication to relieve pain, to feel good or “get high,” or to relieve tension. Misuse occurs when someone:

- Uses a prescription pain medication not prescribed to them, such as using medication prescribed for a family member or friend
- Uses a prescription pain medication in a way other than directed by the doctor or prescriber, such as taking a larger dose or using it for longer than directed
- Uses a prescription pain medication for the feeling the drug causes or to “get high”

Risks of Misuse

Misuse of prescription pain medication is associated with serious negative health outcomes such as:

- Use of alcohol and other drugs, including marijuana and heroin
- Increased risk for addiction and substance use disorder
- Overdose
- Suicidal ideation

Misuse of prescription pain medication can cause overdose and death, especially when used in combination with other drugs.



How to Prevent Misuse

- Talk with your teen's doctor or healthcare provider when they prescribe any medication, especially if it is an opioid pain medication. Include your teen in this conversation.
- Ask about the risks associated with the medication and if alternatives are available. (Prescription pain medication should be limited to the smallest dose and shortest duration required.)
- Consider filling a partial prescription or a smaller quantity initially and obtaining more pills only if they are needed.
- Store medication in the home securely.
- Monitor medication carefully.
- Do not keep unused medication, especially prescription pain medication.
- Dispose of prescription medication safely at drug take-back events in your community or medication disposal sites, using a medication disposal bag before placing in the trash, or asking your local pharmacist for options.
- Talk with the other adults in your teen's life about their safe storage and disposal of prescription pain medication.

Find information about how to dispose of unused prescription medication at

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/parents/safely-dispose-your-prescription-medicines>

Addressing Misuse

If you are concerned that your child is misusing prescription pain medication, reach out for help.

- Your child's/teen's doctor or pediatrician
- School counselor
- National Helpline 800-662-HELP (4357) for info and treatment referrals
- Treatment resources at SAMHSA's locator tool available at <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

If your child/teen is currently misusing prescription pain medication or using other drugs, there are some key things you can do right away to help keep them safe. Make sure they don't drive and have naloxone available in case of overdose. Reach out to your healthcare providers or school counselor for support in getting your child/teen help to stop.