

Opioids



What Are Opioids?

Opioids are a group of drugs that include synthetic opioids like fentanyl, illegal drugs like heroin, and legal prescription pain relievers such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, and morphine. Prescription opioid pain medications can be helpful when used correctly under the guidance of a healthcare provider, but misuse can lead to dependence, addiction overdose or death.



Signs of Opioid misuse?

Prescription opioids can cause physical dependence when used as directed or addiction if misused. Illegal opioids such as heroin are also addictive. Opioid misuse includes:

- Taking someone else's medicine.
- Using medicine in a way other than prescribed.
- Taking medicine to get high.
- Mixing medicine with alcohol or other substances.



How you can help.

These tips are for parents, caregivers, friends, and community members who are concerned someone they know may be at risk for opioid misuse, does not understand the risks of opioids, or why they should use opioids as prescribed while under medical care.

Take Action:

- Check in often to see how they are doing.
- Choose relaxed times to talk, such as in the car, during dinner, or while watching TV.
- Let them know you care and are always there for them.
- Be clear and consistent about your expectations regarding opioid misuse.
- Make an agreement to spend time together doing social and extracurricular activities.
- Help them create an "exit" plan in case they are offered or are faced with a difficult decision about opioids.
- Remove and dispose of medications in your home that are expired, unused, or no longer needed.
- Practicing safe medicine storage, while at home and when on-the-go, can help keep children safe. (Make sure the safety cap is locked. Put medicines up and away and out of children's reach and sight.)



Western Montana Prevention Specialists

WMMHC Prevention Services teaches Montanan's skills for resisting social pressure, impact drug-related attitudes and norms, and promote personal responsibility. We offer substance use prevention programs for individuals or groups that can be in a family, school, or community setting. To learn more about prevention services in your area, contact a Prevention Specialist in your County.

Flathead County 406-751-8301
Lake County 406-565-8545
Lincoln County 406-334-8024
Mineral County 406-532-9770

Missoula County 406-532-9751
Sanders County 406-827-9067
Ravalli County 406-532-9101



www.wmmhc.org/prevention-services

Developed from information provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For references, please click on the QR code.

DISCLAIMER: This toolkit is intended only as a guide and is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, treatment and/or emergency, clinical, or professional care. No toolkit can cover every scenario or be specific to any person.

