

OPIOID USE, MISUSE, AND RECOVERY:

What You Need to Know

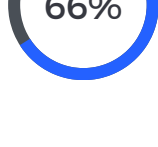
THE STATISTICS

Opioid use, misuse, and overdose deaths have risen dramatically since 1999. In 2017, opioid misuse was declared a public health emergency, and the US government has launched several programs to address the crisis. But what are opioids and why are they so dangerous?



9.2 million

Americans misused opioids in 2021.*



66%

107,622 people

died in 2021 from drug overdose. 66% of those were due to opioids.*



The odds

of dying from an opioid overdose are now greater than those of dying in a car crash.*



WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

“Opioid” is a class of drug that includes both legal (by prescription) and illegal drugs that are mainly used for pain relief but can also be used to relieve other symptoms like cough and shortness of breath.

Examples of opioids:

- Oxycodone (OxyContin)
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin)
- Codeine
- Methadone
- Morphine
- Heroin
- Fentanyl and carfentanyl

WHY ARE OPIOIDS DANGEROUS?

Endorphin Trigger

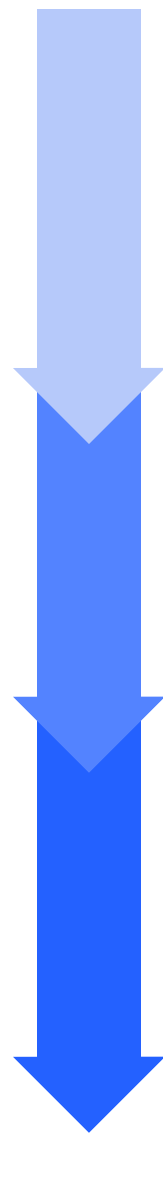
Opioids reduce pain but they also trigger endorphins, which make you feel good. When that wears off, you may find yourself wanting that high again.

Building Tolerance

The more you take opioids, the fewer endorphins your body produces naturally, so over time, you may need to take more opioids to get the same high.

Opioid Use Disorder

As your body reduces its production of endorphins, you become reliant on opioids to feel good. You may crave opioids, experience withdrawal if you don't have them, and start to engage in risky behaviors to get or use them. These are some of the signs that may indicate Opioid Use Disorder (informally known as “addiction”).



FENTANYL

Doctors today recognize the severity of opioid dependence and are less likely to provide increased dosage if you request it. You may turn to illegal opioids to get high. Drug dealers often mix fentanyl into drugs and fake pills to cut production costs. Fentanyl is 50-100 times more powerful than morphine. Only 2mg of fentanyl can be lethal. By using illegal opioids, you risk being exposed to fentanyl, taking a drug much more powerful than your body is used to, and overdose.

A WORD ABOUT NALOXONE

Naloxone is an FDA-approved medication given by intranasal spray (Narcan) or injection that quickly reverses opioid overdose. It is a temporary solution, and someone who takes or is given naloxone should get emergency medical care as soon as possible.



Naloxone is available without a prescription, but specific details may vary from state to state.

OPIOID RECOVERY AND TREATMENT

The good news is treatment for opioid misuse works and recovery is possible! Any substance use disorder is complex, and the treatment for the disease should be tailored to the individual person.

Detox

Generally, a person will experience withdrawal within 6-24 hours of stopping their opioid use. Opioid withdrawal is uncomfortable but not often life-threatening. You may want medical/treatment support, but at a minimum, get medical advice before detoxing and do not do it alone.

Medications

Medications to treat opioid use disorder help relieve dependence, cravings, and withdrawal. While they aren't required for recovery, medications are shown to be very effective to treat opioid use disorder. This is called Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and despite the misconception, is not simply substituting one drug for another. Medications that help recovery from opioids include buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone.

Treatment

Formal treatment for opioid use can include inpatient or outpatient treatment at either a hospital, rehab clinic, or a residential treatment center. Each type of facility has its own benefits, but overall a treatment program will include behavioral health counseling and education on substance use disorder and recovery.

Support

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has a National Helpline to provide referrals to treatment facilities, support groups, and community organizations. (1-800-662-HELP, samhsa.gov)

Narcotics Anonymous is a 12-step support group for people recovering from drug use. (na.org)

For local support, look up community-based support groups, counselors and therapists, and recovery resources.



HOW YOUTURN HEALTH CAN HELP

Youturn Health offers confidential, comprehensive support to help individuals and their family members with stress, substance use, mental health, and suicidal ideation without fear of stigmatization or negative repercussions.



Confidential **PEER COACHING** from NAADAC-credentialed coaches with lived experience in substance misuse and recovery to provide access to community resources and additional support.



Access to **ON-DEMAND ONLINE EDUCATION** through an extensive library of evidence-based, inspiring, and insightful videos designed to increase understanding of stress, anxiety, and wellness.



Increased **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT** with baseline education on substance use disorders and peer coaching support to facilitate healing and healthy behaviors that will increase the likelihood that their loved one will maintain their recovery journey.



IMAP
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CONTACT US

855-411-4627
admissions@youturnhealth.com
insulatorsIMAP.com