

Information for Parents and Young People about Prescription Pain Medication

All adolescents are at risk for misusing opioids. There are a number of concrete ways that parents, family members, and other concerned adults can help prevent opioid misuse among adolescents. The fact that the adolescent brain is still growing means that teens are vulnerable to addiction, but the adolescent brain also is ripe for learning healthy habits and behavior.

To help prevent opioid misuse, those who care about and for adolescents should:

- Treat pain cautiously. If a pain reliever is prescribed to a young person, ask the provider if it is an opioid. If it is a prescription opioid, talk to your doctor about whether to consider alternatives to opioids. For more questions for your doctor, click [here](#).
- Store prescriptions medications safely (in a locked cabinet or box) and dispose of them when they are expired or no longer needed.
- Talk with teens in your life about pain treatment and management. Regardless of drug use history, reach out to youth. Building strong relationships with adolescents is the first step to connecting with youth on drug prevention.
- If you suspect a young person is using opioids, express concern and encourage them to talk openly about the issue. Make sure that adolescents who are struggling with opioid misuse get appropriate treatment and support.

Signs of Opioid Misuse

- Fatigue
- Fading in and out of consciousness
- Slowed breathing
- Constricted pupils
- Flushed skin
- Dry mouth
- Itching
- Nausea
- Vomiting

SOURCES:

National Institute on Drug Abuse: <https://drugfree.org/drug/prescription-pain-relievers-opioids/>

HHS Office of Adolescent Health: <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/drugs/opioids/index.html>

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If you or someone you know has a substance use disorder, also known as addiction, we can help.

Call anytime, toll-free.

