

Be Aware: Prescription Opioids

Availability and Accessibility:



- Commonly prescribed by doctors for teens as pain relief for sports injuries – 1 in 10 athletes report misusing painkillers.
- Prescribed for oral surgery (wisdom teeth) and in some prescription cough syrups.
- Nearly half of students in grades 7 - 12 have been prescribed opioids.
- Two-thirds of teens and young adults who report abuse of prescription medications are getting it from friends, family and acquaintances.

Names to Know:



- **Prescription Names:** Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Norco), Oxycodone, (Oxycontin, Roxicodone, Percocet), Codeine (Robitussin AC), Morphine, Fentanyl
- **Street Names:** OC, Cotton, Percs, Vike, Big Boys

Know the Danger:



- **Danger of Dependence:** Opioids are highly addictive and users can quickly develop a tolerance, requiring higher and stronger doses, which can increase the risk of accidental overdose.
- **Physical Danger:** Misuse of opioids can cause dramatic increases in blood pressure and heart rate, organ damage, difficulty breathing, seizures and even death.

Signs of Dependence and/or Misuse⁴:

- Problems at School or Work
- Physical Health Issues: Lack of energy or motivation, weight loss or gain, red eyes
- Neglected Appearance
- Changes in Behavior: Drastic changes in relationships with friends and family, secretiveness
- Money Issues: Sudden requests for money, money is missing

Questions to Ask Before Opioid Use⁵:



- Is a prescription opioid necessary to treat my pain? Could an over the counter (OTC) pain reliever such as acetaminophen (e. g., Tylenol) in combination with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) be just as effective? For chronic pain, can we explore alternative treatments?
- How many pills are being prescribed and over how long a period? Is it necessary to prescribe this quantity of pills?
- What are the risks of misuse? The prescriber should be able to answer this question for the specific drug being prescribed. Parents should ask.

What to do in the event of an **OPIOID OVERDOSE**

Know the Signs

Slow breathing	Drowsiness
Limp body	Unconsciousness
Blueish lips	Pale face
Vomiting	Slow heart rate
Gurgling	Muscle spasms

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!

Do not wait! Call at the first signs!

MEDICATION DISPOSAL

Prevent medication abuse by properly disposing of medications when no longer needed. Visit dtf.shelbyal.com for a list of Medication Collection Units in Shelby County. Check with your local pharmacy for additional medication disposal options.

If you notice any of the signs or dependence or misuse, talk to your child's physician. An additional resource for help is Children's of Alabama Psychiatric Intake Response Center:

205-638-PIRC (7472)



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