

# What are Opioids?

**Opioids**, also known as opiates or narcotics, are medications that help relieve pain.

**Examples:** Painkillers such as hydrocodone (Vicodin, Norco) oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet) hydromorphone (Dilaudid), morphine, codeine, fentanyl, methadone, and tramadol (Ultram). Heroin is also an opioid and is an illegal drug.

**Opioids** can help manage pain, but they come with many risks. It is very important to take right dose at the right time.

**Opioids** taken more than prescribed or with alcohol can stop your breathing and cause death.

**Opioids** taken with street drugs (cocaine, heroin, MDMA, MOLY, etc.) can kill you.

**Opioids** can make you feel drowsy or confused—causing danger to drive or use machinery.

## Check with your doctor or pharmacist:

- Before you take any other meds—including over-the-counter meds, supplements, or home remedies.
- If you have questions or concerns.

## Health Risks

Constipation, nausea, vomiting  
Death  
Decreased bone density  
Decreased sex drive  
Drowsiness  
Heart changes  
Sensitivity to pain  
Sleep apnea



# Opioid Risks

## Mental Risks

Confusion  
Depression  
Impaired judgment  
Mental decline  
Relationship issues

## Functional Risks

Car accidents  
Disabilities  
Falls  
Unable to manage other health issues



# Ask Your Provider

- 1 Will the opioids stop my pain?
- 2 How often should I take the opioids?
- 3 Will my other meds interact with my pain meds?
- 4 What side effects might I expect?
- 5 What should I do if I have a side effect?
- 6 What should I do if I forget a dose?
- 7 How long will I need to take opioids?
- 8 Why do I have to do urine screening?

# Non-Opioid Options

- Acupuncture
- Chiropractor
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Cold packs
- Counseling
- Exercise
- Heating pads
- Massage
- Meditation
- Physical therapy
- Rehabilitation
- Relaxation training
- Stretching
- Tylenol, Advil, Aleve



## Overdose

### Signs of overdose

- Slow breath or no breath
- Slow pulse
- Pale or clammy skin
- Vomiting
- Unconscious



### Use the “SCARED” steps

- **Stimulate:** Try wake the person.
- **Call 911:** Say location.
  - Is person unconscious?
  - Not breathing?
- **Airway:** Tilt head back and lift chin.
- **Rescue breathing:** Give 1 big breath every 5 seconds.
- **Evaluate:** Can you get the naloxone quickly?
- **Don't leave.**



Find this document at  
<http://www.acgov.org/health/indigent/coalition.htm>  
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## Store and Dispose of Opioids the Right Way



**Opioids** must be kept in a safe place—they are a risk to your family. Get a lock box to prevent children, teens, and others from taking them. *Spread the Word... One Pill can Kill.*



**Opioids** prescribed for you cannot be sold or given away—it is against the law. Find safe disposal sites at:

[www.acgov.org/medscoalition/](http://www.acgov.org/medscoalition/)

## Addiction Resources

Alameda County ACCESS line 1-800-491-9099

BAART Programs 510-533-0800

Berkeley Addiction Treatment Services  
510-644-0200

C.U.R.A. 510-713-3202

East Oakland Recovery Center  
510-568-2432

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Treatment Referral Helpline  
1-800-662-4357 (TDD: 1-800-487-4889)

Treatment facility locators on the Web  
[www.samhsa.gov/treatment/index.aspx](http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/index.aspx)

# Taking Your Pain Medications Safely



## A Patient's Guide to Using Opioids Safely to Manage Pain