

What is Opioid Misuse?

Opioid misuse or misuse of prescription drugs means taking medication in a manner other than prescribed (e.g., taking someone else's prescription, even if for a legitimate medical complaint such as pain; taking medication to feel euphoria (i.e., to get high).

Consequences for opioid misuse: social, economic, and health problems associated with substance use (e.g., illnesses, physical dependence, overdose, crime, car crashes, and suicides related to substance use).

Effects on the body: increased sensitivity to pain, constipation, drowsiness, mental confusion, nausea, vomiting and dry mouth, sleepiness, dizziness, confusion, depression, low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy and strength, itching and sweating.

Anyone who misuses opioids is at risk of overdosing. It does not matter if the individual is a new or experienced user or if the individual snorts, injects, or takes pills.

Naloxone (Narcan®, Evzio®) is a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose. It binds to opioid receptors and can reverse and block the effects of other opioids. It can be administered via injection or nasal spray.

Signs of Opioid Overdose

Slow, shallow breathing

Clammy skin
Convulsions

Respiratory depression and arrest (stop breathing)

Coma

Death

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