



Rx Pain Medications

KNOW THE OPTIONS • GET THE FACTS

Prescribing Opioids: Reduce the Risk

The Facts

- In 2014, more than 240 million prescriptions were written for prescription opioids, which is more than enough to give every American adult their own bottle of pills.¹
- Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, with 52,404 lethal drug overdoses in 2015. Opioid addiction is driving this epidemic, with 20,101 overdose deaths related to prescription opioids and 12,990 overdose deaths related to heroin in 2015.²
- The cost of opioid overdoses that occurred in 2009 was estimated to be more than \$20 billion in direct medical costs and indirect work loss costs.³
- Of the 20.5 million Americans 12 or older who had a substance use disorder in 2015, 2 million had a substance use disorder involving prescription opioids and 591,000 had a substance use disorder involving heroin.⁴

Reducing Use, Misuse, and Overdose

- Talk with patients about the risks of taking prescription opioids, including dependence, opioid use disorders, overdose, and even death.
- Discuss with patients a variety of pain treatment options, including non-opioid or nonpharmacologic therapies.
- Prescribe the lowest effective dose and quantity and monitor treatment progress regularly.
- Review patient expectations for their prescriptions.
- Make a plan with your patient on how to stop opioids when his or her treatment is done or no longer effective.
- Teach patients how to safely use, store, and dispose of prescription drugs.
- Check your state's prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP).

Additional Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Opioid Overdose Home Page:
<http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose>
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Drug Safety and Availability: Opioid Medications:
<http://www.fda.gov/drugs/drugsafety/informationbydrugclass/ucm337066.htm>
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Opioid and Pain Management CMEs/CEs:
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/opioid-pain-management-cmesces>
- Providers' Clinical Support System for Medication Assisted Treatment:
<http://www.asam.org/education/pcss-mat>
- Providers' Clinical Support System for Opioid Therapies: <http://pcss-o.org>
- SAMHSA's Efforts to Fight Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse:
<http://www.samhsa.gov/prescription-drug-misuse-abuse/samhsas-efforts>

NEED HELP?

If a patient is misusing opioids or has other substance misuse issues, refer them to an opioid treatment program or office-based opioid treatment provider in your area or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Helpline.

Call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for 24-hour free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, and recovery in English and Spanish, or visit www.samhsa.gov/find-help.



¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). The opioid epidemic: By the numbers. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Factsheet-opioids-061516.pdf>

² American Society of Addiction Medicine. (2016). Opioid addiction 2016 facts and figures. Retrieved from <https://www.asam.org/docs/default-source/advocacy/opioid-addiction-disease-facts-figures.pdf>

³ Inocencio, T., Carroll, N., Read, E., & Holdford, D. (2013). The economic burden of opioid-related poisoning in the United States. *Pain Medicine*, 14(10), 1534–1547.

⁴ American Society of Addiction Medicine. (2016). Opioid addiction 2016 facts and figures. Retrieved from <http://www.asam.org/docs/default-source/advocacy/opioid-addiction-disease-facts-figures.pdf>