

29. Opioid use disorder can be treated.

30. Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) can help control addiction.

31. MAT involves both medication and counseling.

32. Even with treatment, it is not unusual for a person with an opioid use disorder to relapse (go back to using drugs) at least once.

33. It takes time to unlearn addictive behavior patterns and develop new coping skills.

34. Opioid relapse can be deadly. Have naloxone on hand.

35. If you are concerned about opioid dependence or addiction in yourself, or someone you care about, talk to a doctor. Treatment is available. Recovery is possible.



Opioid-related overdose deaths are increasing at an alarming rate. In fact, health officials are calling it an opioid epidemic. Everyone needs to know about the risks of opioid use and misuse. They also need to know about naloxone, the emergency medication to reverse overdose. Opioid addiction is a medical condition and treatment is available. Get the facts.



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This pamphlet is not a substitute for medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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The Opioid Epidemic

35 Things Everyone Needs to Know



1. Drug overdoses are now killing more Americans under the age of 50 than any other cause.

2. More than 175 people die every day from an overdose.

3. Opioids are powerful pain-killing drugs.

4. Opioids include legally prescribed drugs like oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine and fentanyl.

5. Heroin, the illegal street drug, is also an opioid.

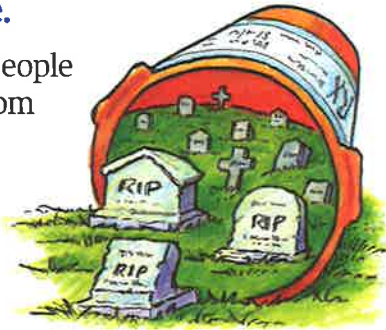
6. Opioid use has risks – even when prescribed by a doctor.

7. Regular use can lead to dependence and addiction. When misused, overdose and death are possible.

8. Opioid misuse can cause long-lasting effects on the brain. For this reason, opioid use disorder is considered a chronic disease.

9. Opioid use disorder can happen to anyone.

10. 95 million Americans used opioid painkillers in the past year – more than used tobacco.



11. It is common for a person misusing prescription opioids to illegally use drugs that were prescribed to a family member or a friend.

12. Across the U.S., heroin use has increased in people of all ages and income levels.

13. Heroin is often stronger, cheaper and easier to find than prescription opioids.

14. A prior dependence on prescription opioids is one of the biggest risk factors for starting heroin.

15. Because heroin is often injected, it puts people at risk for HIV and hepatitis.

16. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid. It is used for treating severe pain.

17. Fentanyl is up to 100 times stronger than morphine and many times more powerful than heroin.

18. The use of illegally made and sold fentanyl is on the rise.

19. Fentanyl is being added to heroin.

20. Fentanyl is also being added to non-opioid drugs such as cocaine, or pills made to look like other drugs such as Xanax.



21. Carfentanil is another very strong synthetic opioid. Just a few grains of the drug can kill a person.

22. First responders and bystanders risk overdose if they accidentally touch or breathe in these synthetic opioids.

23. Studies suggest that fentanyl and similar opioids are causing the increase in overdose deaths.

24. Naloxone is a drug that can reverse an opioid overdose.

25. More than one dose of naloxone may be needed to reverse a fentanyl overdose.

26. People with an opioid use disorder should keep naloxone on hand.

27. Friends and family should know the signs of overdose – and how to use naloxone.

28. A doctor or pharmacist can tell you where to get naloxone and how to use it.

