

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are powerful, highly addictive narcotics that mimic chemicals in the brain and body. Commonly prescribed to treat pain, opioids trick the brain into feeling pleasure. And, while opioids can make a real, positive difference for people living with chronic pain, they should always be taken with extreme caution.



HELP STOP THE EPIDEMIC

Taking just a few simple steps truly helps. First, expect that you will have some pain after surgery or an injury. Then, follow your doctor's instructions about taking medication. But don't be afraid to ask questions or voice concerns about prescriptions – be your own advocate.

Make sure you store medications carefully and get rid of unused drugs at drug disposal sites. And protect your identity by removing labels. You just might save someone's life – especially someone you know and love.

PAIN KILLERS CAN BE JUST PLAIN KILLERS

What you should know about opioids and the opioid epidemic in South Carolina.

GET MORE INFORMATION

There is plenty of additional information out there about opioids. Do your own research and become more informed. To learn how to talk to your loved ones, or where to get help and find treatment in South Carolina, visit JustPlainKillers.com.

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4 IN 5 HEROIN USERS STARTED WITH PRESCRIPTION PAIN KILLERS

BRAIN CHEMISTRY CAN CHANGE IN JUST 3 DAYS, WHICH CAN LEAD TO OPIOID USE DISORDER

IN 2019, THERE WERE 876 OVERDOSE DEATHS IN S.C. RELATED TO OPIOIDS

OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS IN OUR STATE HAVE INCREASED 5 YEARS IN A ROW

OPIOID PRESCRIPTION FACTS

- 1 in 4 people prescribed opioids struggles with addiction
- Nearly 5 million opioid prescriptions are filled in S.C. every year – nearly one for every person in the state.
- In S.C., an opioid prescription is filled every 7 seconds.

ADDICTION IS A DISEASE

Addiction to opioids, also known as opioid use disorder, is a chronic disease characterized by drug use that is compulsive or difficult to control, despite harmful consequences. Opioids change the brain, making it difficult to quit. No one should ever be embarrassed to ask for help. Help and prevention services are available throughout South Carolina.

SIDE EFFECTS

Like many prescription medications, opioids can have many harmful side effects. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Drowsiness
- Mental confusion
- Nausea
- Slowing of the respiratory system
- Weak bones
- Diarrhea
- Severe itching
- Acute abdominal pain
- Constipation
- Respiratory depression
- Hormonal problems

FINDING HELP, TREATMENT

Overcoming an opioid use disorder is a complex process that can range from intensive behavioral changes and specific treatment to engagement in community-based support. South Carolina has local treatment providers throughout the state. Find one near you at: justplainkillers.com/find-help

NARCAN® AND REVERSING AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

The reasons to keep Narcan on hand are different for everyone. But the one commonality is that this easy-to-use nasal spray can reverse an opioid overdose. In South Carolina, this life-saving drug is available from community distributors and pharmacies – without a prescription. Have it available for people who might be at risk for an opioid overdose.

OPIOID ALTERNATIVES

Ask your doctor or dentist about opioid alternatives. Over-the-counter medications are safer and can be as effective in treating pain. Exercise, physical therapy, massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic care are also options.

Tips for Safe Storage

Part of what makes these drugs so dangerous is their prevalence and availability. Here are a few tips for safe storage:

SECURE THEM

Lock up prescription medication away from children and in a safe place only you know about.

NO LOOSE PILLS

Prescription opioids should only be kept in the bottle provided by your pharmacy.

ALWAYS SECURE AFTER USE

After taking your prescribed dose, immediately lock up the bottle.

KEEP TRACK OF QUANTITIES

Know how much of your prescription remains so you know if any pills have been taken by someone else.

REMOVE THEM FROM YOUR HOME

Drop off any pills, liquids or other medications at a local drug disposal site.

Find the drug disposal sites near you: justplainkillers.com/take-action