

STRATEGIES TO AVOID OPIOID MISUSE

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SPOTLIGHT FACTSHEET

ACCIDENTAL OVERDOSE CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE TAKING AN OPIOID, BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE FATAL.

Opioids or pain medications have many benefits, but they also have the potential of misuse and overdose. Prescription painkillers, heroin, and fentanyl are all forms of opioids. Heroin and fentanyl are much cheaper and often easier to obtain than prescription pain medications. Statewide strategies like the prescription drug monitoring program and provider education have helped reduce misuse. You can help keep your family and community safe by following these proven prevention strategies in your home:

- [Guard](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/prescriptionsafety) (www.cdc.gov/wtc/prescriptionsafety) all of your medications and dispose of them properly
- Consider alternative forms of [pain management](http://www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/) (www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/) to handle your pain
- [Develop a safety plan](http://reversesilence.org/) (reversesilence.org/) to avoid or recover from an accidental overdose
- [Talk](http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/talk-about-drugs.html) (kidshealth.org/en/parents/talk-about-drugs.html) with your child and loved ones about their exposure to and use of all substances

When taken as prescribed, pain medications are safe, effective, and have a low risk of addiction for most people for short-term use. These medications are not a problem if:

- It is your prescription to take (not someone else's).
- You are taking the right amount and not more to get high.
- You are taking the prescription in the form it was prescribed like a pill (not crushing or injecting).
- You aren't mixing the medication with alcohol or other substances.

When misused, prescription pain medications can be dangerous and addictive. Misuse includes taking a prescription medication:

- That was not prescribed to you,
- Using in a greater quantity or more often than prescribed,
- In a form other than its original form (e.g. snorting or injecting), and mixing it with alcohol or other substances.

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD

Prescription opioids are risky when used in a way other than prescribed. Many young people think

pain relievers are safe to use because a doctor has prescribed them. Two-thirds of teens who report misuse of prescription medicine get it from friends, family, and acquaintances. Teens may take and share prescription medication.

Help your child understand the risks: A child's brain is developing well into their 20's. Healthy experiences form important connections in the brain that build wiring necessary for learning, problem solving, memory, and other tasks. Misusing prescription pain medications makes it difficult for the young brain to communicate, learn, regulate emotion and mood, and process information now and later in life. The earlier someone starts using substances, the more likely they are to become addicted later in life and suffer negative consequences.

Validate your child's feelings: Explore with your child their stresses and ways they can cope with negative feelings. While you may not always agree with your child's choices and experiences, it is important to validate their feelings. End the conversation by saying something like: "thank you for sharing your feelings and thoughts. I'm always here to listen."

Find a good time to talk: Find a time when your child is willing to talk. Time in the car or during a walk is often good, especially when you can avoid direct eye contact. Ask open-ended questions like:

"Is this a good time to talk about some things I am worried about?"

"What do you know about the misuse of painkillers?"

"What concerns do you have?"

Talk with your child early and often. If you, your child, or anyone in your household is using prescription opioids, talk about the importance of never sharing the prescription with anyone under any circumstances. Medications prescribed for someone else are not safe for them.

Explore alternatives to pain management.

In some cases, you may be able to avoid prescription pain medications altogether. Physical therapy or over-the-counter medications like Advil™ or Tylenol™ are very effective. Talk with your doctor and consider the options.

Make a safety plan. Accidental overdoses occur, but they do not have to be fatal. Get a supply and know how to use [naloxone](http://www.getnaloxonenow.org/) (<http://www.getnaloxonenow.org/>). It can reverse an overdose in minutes.

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE

If you or someone you know takes pain medication or opioids, with or without a prescription, learn how to safely use, store, and dispose of them to avoid serious problems with non-medical misuse.

SAFE USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take your medication only as prescribed.• Do not take more medication or take it more frequently than prescribed.• Never share your medication.
SAFE STORAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store your medication in a safe and secure place away from children, pets, and visitors.• Avoid storing it with other medications you keep in a shared place like a cabinet where other people have access.• Keep track of your medication by counting your pills.
SAFE DISPOSAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discard all unused or expired medications at a drug take back program (www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html) or a local participating pharmacy (https://apps2.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e2s1).

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

The Partnership @drugfreeNH

drugfreeNH.org: A safe place to gather and learn about local strategies and activities to prevent substance misuse.

Never Use Alone

Neverusealone.com or call 1-800-484-3731: To talk with a lifesaving point of contact while using substances, call Never Use Alone. No judgment, no shaming and no preaching.

The Doorway

thedorway.nh.gov or call 2-1-1 (or 1-866-444-4211): A statewide service that supports any NH resident, of any age, with a substance or alcohol concern or issue including access to free naloxone.

NH Alcohol and Drug Treatment Locator

nhtreatment.org: A searchable database with treatment agencies and individual practitioners offering substance use disorder services.

2-1-1 NH

211NH.org: A comprehensive source of information about local resources and services to help you take care of yourself.

Get Naloxone Now

getnaloxonenow.org: Get free online resources and training to respond effectively to an opioid overdose emergency.

Reverse the Silence

reversesilence.org: A public awareness campaign with resources about opioid overdose preparedness and prevention.



Extension



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PARTNERSHIP
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