

Opioids

Prescriptions:

Fentanyl, Codeine, Morphine, Vicodin, Oxycontin, Methadone, Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)

What is it?

Opioids are pain killers commonly prescribed for short term use following an injury or accident, or for pain management of long term conditions. They come in varying strengths and forms. Some are pills and others are liquids or patches.

Why do people use it?

- ◆ Physical or emotional pain management
- ◆ Euphoria, relaxation or to cope with stress
- ◆ Physical or emotional dependence

What can go wrong?

- ◆ Intense withdrawal symptoms, even after short term use.
- ◆ Physical and/or emotional dependence.
- ◆ Overdose or death, especially if taken with other substances.

How does it work?

Once opioids are absorbed into the bloodstream, they travel to the brain and act as a painkiller that the body would naturally produce when injured. This affects people differently.

Information adapted from heretohelp.ca, camh.ca & towardtheheart.com

For more information visit their websites.

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Harm Reduction

1. Don't use opioids with other substances, including alcohol.
2. Take a small amount to start. Starting with a little amount lowers the risk of overdose. You can always use a bit more, but can't change your mind and take less.
2. Be prepared in the event of overdose. **Have Naloxone on hand.** Use with trusted people, in a familiar place. If you use alone, have someone check on you. Use overdose prevention sites when possible.
3. Choose safer methods of use. Injecting has the highest risk. If injecting, wash your hands. Rotate the injection site, avoiding the neck, hands and feet. Clean the injection site, use clean needles, and avoid sharing them.
4. If snorting, avoid sharing straws. Rinsing the nose before and after will reduce irritation.

What to look for:

1. Not moving and can't be woken
2. Slow or not breathing
3. Choking, gurgling sounds or snoring
4. Blue lips or nails
5. Cold or clammy skin
6. Tiny pupils
7. Vomiting

Overdose

What to do:

CALL 9-1-1

Follow the **SAVE ME** steps below to respond.

If the person must be left unattended at any time, put them in the recovery position.



Source: Toward the Heart - BC Center for Disease

Discovery Youth & Family Substance Use Services

Victoria/South Island: 250-519-5313

Cowichan Valley: 250-737-2029

Nanaimo/Ladysmith: 250-739-5790

Oceanside area: 250-947-8215

Mt Waddington area: 250-902-6063

