


# OPIOID FACT SHEET

Opioids are drugs used to treat pain. When a person gets hurt, the pain message comes into the brain through a receptor in the muscle or skin. The message first goes to the spinal cord and then it goes to the brain. Opioids interrupt the pain messages being sent to our brain.


Doctors prescribe opioids to help patients deal with pain. That is a legitimate use of the drug. However, any time that a person takes an opioid, there is a chance for addiction or tolerance and people who use opioids legally are more likely to misuse them later on. **If you are injured or are in a situation where you are dealing with pain, it's best to try other options before using a prescribed painkiller.** Opioids are safest when used for only 2 to 3 days for acute pain. If you need opioids, work with your doctor to take the lowest dose possible. Use for the shortest amount of time possible.

If you are using prescription painkillers and are concerned about being addicted, talk to your doctor. Talk to your parents. Talk to someone who can help. There are other options for pain management.

### SIDE EFFECTS OF OPIOID USE MAY INCLUDE:



**NAUSEA/  
VOMITING**



**ANXIETY,  
PARANOIA**


- Hallucinations
- Paranoia
- An overwhelming sense of dissatisfaction
- Restlessness
- Sedation/fatigue/lethargy
- Headache
- Delirium/confusion
- Clouded vision
- Slow and ineffective breathing
- Dizziness
- Constipation
- Sweats
- Dry mouth
- Seizures
- Death

**When people overdose on opioids, their breathing can slow or stop.** This decreases the amount of oxygen that reaches the brain. This causes a condition called hypoxia. Hypoxia can lead to a coma, permanent brain damage, and even death.

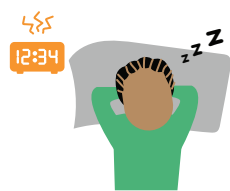
### SIGNS OF OPIOID OVERDOSE:




**BLUE LIPS OR NAILS**




**DIZZINESS  
AND CONFUSION**




**CAN'T BE WOKEN UP**



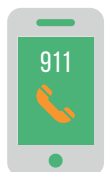
**CHOKING, GURGLING,  
OR SNORING SOUNDS**



**SLOW, WEAK, OR  
NO BREATHING**



**DIFFICULTY STAYING  
AWAKE OR DROWSINESS**



**If you think someone is overdosing on opioids,  
call 911 right away.  
An overdose on opioids can quickly lead to death.**