

# Prescription Pain Pills – Patient/Caregiver Education

*Millions of Americans take opioid drugs routinely for pain relief. While effective painkillers, they can also be dangerous and addictive. Learn more about your prescription and how you can stay safe.*

## Opioids/Opiates

Opioids/Opiates work by blocking your brain's sensation of pain. They can also affect the pleasure center of your brain, causing a sense of euphoria.

When taken as directed, opioids can be very effective in relieving pain. However, the body soon begins to develop a tolerance for the medication, so that the same dose of medication offers less pain relief. If you feel the need to take more of the drug than was prescribed to you- *Talk to your doctor!*

**Opioids include: Vicodin, Percocet, OxyContin, Oxycodone, Methadone, Morphine, Opana, Dilaudid, and Fentanyl among others.**

## Watch out for Addiction Warning Signs

- Taking opioid medications for the feeling of pleasure or euphoria or for emotional escape
- People suggesting that you cut back or quit using the medications
- Taking the medications other than orally- such as crushing and snorting, or injecting.
- Having cravings when not taking the drugs
- Seeking early refills of prescriptions, prescriptions from other doctors, or drugs from other sources.

## Tips for Patients with Pain Medication

- Do not increase your dosage without consulting your doctor
- Be aware of potential interactions with other substances, such as alcohol, allergy medications, anti-anxiety drugs such as benzodiazepines (benzos), and sleep aids
- Do not sell or give your medications to others, or accept medications from other sources than a pharmacy
- Tell your doctor about any other drugs you take, including over-the-counter medicines and street drugs
- Tell your doctor if you have a history of substance abuse, an addictive personality, or are experiencing any of the warning signs of addiction.



## Watch out for Overdose!

*Signs of an overdose include slow or shallow breathing, pale and clammy skin, snoring or gurgling while asleep and unresponsiveness to yelling or physical stimulation.*

If you suspect that someone may have overdosed call:

**9-1-1 or Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222**