

Opiate Addiction

Opiate addiction is a substance use disorder where a person has an uncontrollable urge to use an opiate even though there are negative consequences to their life, health and relationships.

What are opiate drugs?

There are many different kinds of opiates. Some are prescription medications usually prescribed by medical professionals to relieve pain. Though they are prescribed, they can still be abused and a person can become addicted to them. Examples of prescription opiates are oxycodone (OxyContin and Percocet), hydrocodone (Vicodin and Lortab), fentanyl, codeine and morphine. Another type of opiate is heroin. Heroin is highly addictive and not legal. It can be smoked, snorted and injected.

Signs you may have an opiate addiction

Though each person is different, some common signs that you may be struggling with an opiate addiction are if you:

- Take more of your prescription opiate than you are prescribed.
- Go to multiple doctors to get your prescription opiate medication.
- Steal or forge signatures to get a prescription.
- Are irritable, overly sensitive, restless when not on your medication.
- Have to take more of the medication to get the same desired effect.
- Have flu-like symptoms when you do not take the drug.
- Have legal trouble related to the drug use.
- Are in dangerous situations due to the drug.
- Have trouble at work, home or socially because of the drug use.

Why do some people become addicted and others don't?

There are many things that can determine if someone becomes addicted to a drug. Though usually the first time a person uses a drug is voluntary, the brain changes with use. Then the person can become addicted. You are more at risk if you have:

- Someone in your family has history of addiction.
- Trauma or abuse in your history.
- A mental health disorder.
- Used drugs or alcohol at an early age.
- Injected drugs.

Opiate drug abuse and your health

Abusing opiates can be harmful to your physical health. You may experience:

- Stomach issues and constipation.
- Depression.
- Rapid decrease in blood pressure not explained by other medical conditions.
- Disorientation or confusion in familiar surroundings.
- Shortness of breath.

What treatment is available?

The first step in getting treatment is admitting you have a problem. Recovery can require a lot of time, patience and courage. Talk to a health care professional about treatment options in your area. Options include individual, group and intensive outpatient therapy. Support groups, like Narcotics Anonymous, are free and may be suggested. There are also medication assisted treatment options, like Methadone and Suboxone. One medication used for opioid withdrawal and opiate overdose is Naloxone. It is one of the two chemicals found in the drug Suboxone. Using Naloxone alone will not produce dependence but one who takes it with an opiate may have withdrawal symptoms.

How can I help if someone I know has an addiction?

You cannot force or guilt the individual into getting help or quitting the drug. The individual has to want to quit and get help. What you can do is:

- Do not engage in the substance use with them, guilt them or throw away the drugs.
- Talk to them about why you are concerned and give specific examples.
- Set boundaries and stick with them.
- Take care of yourself. Manage your stress in a healthy manner.

Where can I get help?

To find a support group in your area go to: naindiana.org

Call MDwise customer service and request to speak to a care manager: **1-800-356-1204**