

What are opioids and opioid addiction?

What are opioids?

Opioids are a type of medicine used to help relieve pain. They lower the number of pain signals your body sends to your brain. They also change how your brain responds to pain.

Are opioids safe?

Opioids are usually safe when you follow your doctor's instructions. If opioids are being considered for treatment of acute pain not related to surgery or trauma, they are recommended in low doses for a few days. If you get a prescription that lasts more than a week, check with your doctor to make sure that this is the best choice for you. If you have chronic pain, ask your doctor if there are other recommended alternative treatments for your type of pain.

How do I know if I'm taking an opioid?

Opioids have many names. Some examples of opioids are:

- Codeine
- Hydrocodone
(Vicodin, Norco, Lortab, Lorcet)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
- Methadone
- Morphine (MS-Contin, Kadian)
- Opium
- Oxycodone
(Oxycontin, Percocet, Percodan)
- Oxymorphone (Opana)
- Sufentanil
- Tramadol (Ultram, Ultracet)



What is opioid addiction?

Using opioids can lead to addiction. However, this doesn't always happen. When you use the drug, the pleasurable effects can make you want to keep using it. Over time, your brain and body may become dependent on the drug. This can make you feel sick when you don't use it, but it is different from being "addicted." Addiction means you have behavior issues or problems with others because of your use. You may hear people call this "opioid use disorder", or OUD. Only a health care professional can diagnose you with an OUD.

Symptoms of OUD include:

- Frequent sleepiness
- Shallow or slow breathing
- Getting sick or vomiting
- Low motivation
- Feeling high
- Feeling irritable
- Depression
- Anxiety attacks
- Craving opioids
- Relationship troubles
- Unable to control use
- Destructive behaviors

How do I know if I'm addicted to opioids?

You might be addicted to opioids if you crave them or feel like you can't control the urge to take them. You may also keep using opioids without your doctor's approval. Additionally, you may have trouble going to work or family events.

How do I get help for opioid addiction?

There are many places you can reach out to for help:

- If you or a loved one needs help right away, **call 9-1-1**
- For a list of treatment centers that help with opioid use disorder, visit <https://dmh.mo.gov/ada/help.html>, or call **1-800-575-7480**
- For a list of treatment centers that accept patients with poor or no insurance, visit <https://missouriopioidstr.org/treatment>

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The Missouri Department of Mental Health Team



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