



GET THE FACTS ON OPIOIDS

What are opioids?

Opioids are a type of drug that include synthetics like fentanyl; common pain relievers that are legally available with a prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine and morphine; the illegal drug heroin; and many others.

How are opioids used?

Opioids have different forms. Heroin can be a powder or a black sticky substance called “black tar.” Fentanyl can be a powder, dropped on blotter paper or made into pills. Prescription opioids can be pills, patches or liquids. Opioids can be swallowed, injected, smoked, dropped in the eye, snorted or worn as a patch. Some people also mix opioids with other drugs.

How do opioids affect the body?

Opioids work by activating certain nerves in the brain, known as opioid receptors, which block pain signals. This can cause side effects such as dry mouth, deep relaxation in the arms and legs and altered brain functioning. Long-term use can lead to serious health problems like collapsed veins, heart infections, sores that do not heal and lung problems. Opioids can lead to addiction, which is a type of Substance Use Disorder.

Signs of potential opioid overdose:



Slowed, shallow or stopped breathing



Pinpoint pupils



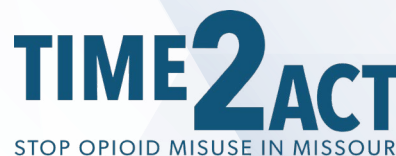
Unresponsive or becomes less alert



Purple or blue lips or fingernails



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MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH &
SENIOR SERVICES**

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Opioids and naloxone:

Naloxone can quickly reverse an opioid overdose by blocking the drug's effects. It can restore normal breathing within 2 to 3 minutes in a person whose breath has slowed or stopped due to an opioid overdose. Naloxone will not harm someone if they are not overdosing on opioids, so it is always best to use it if you think someone is overdosing. If you give someone naloxone, stay with them until emergency help arrives.

Safety tips:

- Never use alone
- Carry naloxone
- Use in a safe, clean location
- Use new injection equipment
- Wash your hands and injection sites before using
- Keep all sores clean and covered, and see a doctor for sores that do not heal

How to help someone who has overdosed:

- Call 911 immediately
- Give naloxone
- Give rescue breaths

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Vicodin® is a registered trademark of Abbvie Inc.

Health or substance use disorders services:

- Community Health Centers: MO-PCA.org/find-a-health-center
- SUD Treatment Centers: NoMoDeaths.com/get-treatment

For more information, visit:

- StaySafe: MoStaysSafe.com
- NoMO Deaths: NoMoDeaths.com



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