

Opioid 101



A national crisis

You've no doubt heard that there's a national opioid epidemic, affecting people of all ages and income levels. Someone you know — a friend, a family member or even a coworker — might be misusing, abusing or addicted to prescription painkillers.

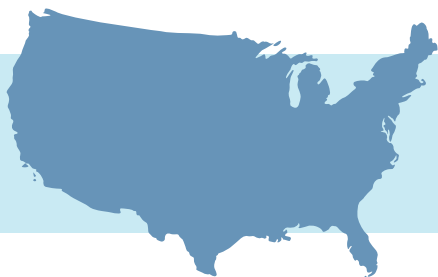
What's an opioid?

Opioids are a class of drugs that include pain medications available legally by prescription, such as hydrocodone and oxycodone. This also includes synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and the illegal drug, heroin.

About **109,000** Americans died of a drug overdose in 2022.¹

Someone dies from an overdose every **five minutes** in America.¹

Without intervention initiatives, opioid deaths could dramatically increase to about **165,000** annually by 2025²



On an average day in the U.S., more than **650,000** opioid prescriptions are dispensed.

Why are opioid pain medications prescribed?

Opioid pain medications are commonly prescribed for severe pain, often after surgery, and are generally safe when taken for a short time and as prescribed by a doctor.

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

²Forbes

What can you do to prevent opioid misuse?

There are several ways to help reduce exposure to opioids and prevent misuse.

Work with your doctor and caregivers

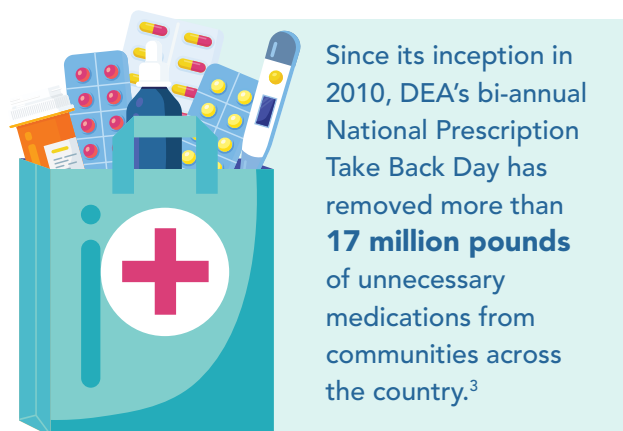
- If you're prescribed opioids for pain, work with your doctor to create a plan to manage your pain and make the best decision for you. Follow up regularly with your doctor.
- Always follow the instructions you get with your medication. Many people don't need to take all of the pain medication prescribed. If you have questions or are unsure of how to take your medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Take and store opioids properly

- Never take opioids in greater amounts or more often than prescribed. Never sell or share prescriptions.
- Store your prescriptions in a secure place, out of reach of others, such as children, family, friends and visitors.
- Naloxone, or Narcan, is a life-saving tool you can use in case of an overdose. This is available at the pharmacy, just ask the pharmacist when you're prescribed an opioid.

Make sure unused drugs are disposed of properly. This reduces the chance that others may accidentally take or intentionally misuse the unneeded medicine.

Below are some ways to get rid of expired, unwanted or unused medicines. These services are free and anonymous. You may also drop off unused pet medicines.



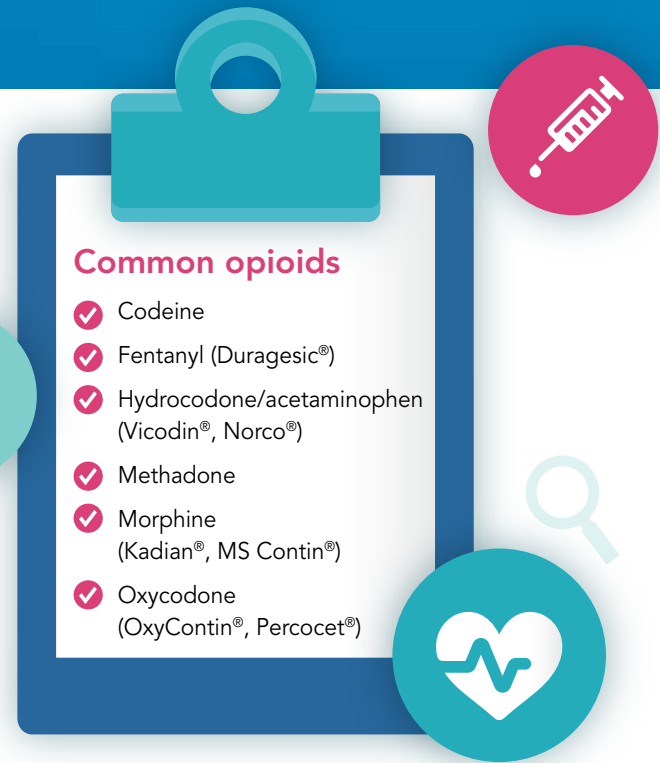
- The Drug Enforcement Administration's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is one way to safely dispose of most types of unneeded medicines. Learn more at takebackday.dea.gov/.*
- Many state police posts across the country allow residents to safely and anonymously drop off expired, unwanted, or unused prescription drugs.
- Some pharmacies and hospitals may also accept unused or expired medications.

Get help

If you or someone close to you need help for a substance use disorder, talk to your doctor or call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP or go to SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at findtreatment.samhsa.gov/.*

*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network don't own or control this website.

³DEA



Common opioids

- ✓ Codeine
- ✓ Fentanyl (Duragesic®)
- ✓ Hydrocodone/acetaminophen (Vicodin®, Norco®)
- ✓ Methadone
- ✓ Morphine (Kadian®, MS Contin®)
- ✓ Oxycodone (OxyContin®, Percocet®)