

Indiana's Opioid EPIDEMIC

What you need to know.



■ What is an opioid?

Opiates are narcotics commonly known as “painkillers.” You may know them by names like Vicodin or Percocet. Also included are drugs like codeine, morphine, fentanyl and others.

■ Why are they used?

They are used to relieve many types of pain. When used properly they can help with pain after surgery and pain associated with serious illness like advanced stage cancer.

■ What are other ways to treat pain?

Research has shown that things like yoga, meditation/relaxation techniques, acupuncture, and massages have been effective in treating pain conditions like fibromyalgia, back/neck pain, rheumatoid arthritis and headaches.

■ If I'm prescribed an opiate, how long should I take it?

As of July 1, 2017, Indiana law requires a SEVEN day limit on opioid prescriptions if the patient is receiving the medication for the first time. Research has found that following surgery, patients often don't need an opiate medication for longer than seven days. If your pain is still unmanaged, adults are able to get an additional seven-day fill of the medicine. For chronic, or end of life conditions, exceptions can be made. You should always take these painkillers for the shortest amount of time possible and only when other pain management methods do not work.

■ What are some side effects of using opiates?

Short term or long term opioid use can cause drowsiness, confusion, constipation and upset stomach. This happens more the longer you are on opioids, or the higher the dose. Long-term use can lead to dependence.

■ What medication should I avoid taking if I'm prescribed opiates?

Combining opioids with other drugs like Benzodiazepams, also known as “Benzos,” and drugs like Ativan can have dangerous outcomes. These drugs should never be combined.

■ How can I prevent addiction to opiates?

Before using an opiate to manage your pain, be sure you and your doctor have tried all other methods of pain management first. Be open to using alternative methods to treat your pain. If you need opiates, it is best to limit your use of opiates to no more than seven days. Using these drugs for more than 30 days can lead to addiction and dependence. You should use the low and slow rule, meaning start with the lowest dose and use as infrequently as possible. Taking these steps will prevent addiction to opiate medications.

If you are struggling & need support, text **MHS** to **741741**. It's free, anonymous & available 24/7. You are not alone.



DID YOU KNOW?

4 OUT OF 5

HEROIN users shared they began by misusing their prescription drugs.

DRUG OVERDOSE is the leading cause of accidental deaths in the U.S., with opioid addiction driving this epidemic.



mhsindiana.com