PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Prescription opioids can be used to help relieve moderate-to-severe pain and are often prescribed following a surgery or injury, or for certain health conditions. These medications can be an important part of treatment but also come with serious risks. It is important to work with your healthcare provider to make sure you are getting the safest, most effective care.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS OF OPIOID USE?

Prescription opioids carry serious risks of addiction and overdose, especially with prolonged use. An opioid overdose, often marked by slowed breathing, can cause sudden death. The use of prescription opioids can have a number of side effects as well, even when taken as directed:

- Tolerance—meaning you might need to take more of a medication for the same pain relief
- Physical dependence—meaning you have symptoms of withdrawal when a medication is stopped
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression
- Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy, and strength
- Itching and sweating

If you are prescribed opioids for pain:

- Never take opioids in greater amounts or more often than prescribed.
- Follow up with your primary healthcare provider within ___ days.
- Work together to create a plan on how to manage your pain.
- Talk about ways to help manage your pain that don’t involve prescription opioids.
- Talk about any and all concerns and side effects.
- Help prevent misuse and abuse.
  - Never sell or share prescription opioids.
  - Never use another person’s prescription opioids.
- Store prescription opioids in a secure place and out of reach of others (this may include visitors, children, friends, and family).
- Safely dispose of unused prescription opioids. Find your community drug take-back program or your pharmacy mail-back program, or flush them down the toilet, following guidance from the Food and Drug Administration (www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou).
- Visit www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose to learn about the risks of opioid abuse and overdose.
- If you believe you may be struggling with addiction, tell your healthcare provider and ask for guidance or call SAMHSA’s National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP.

Avoid alcohol while taking prescription opioids. Also, unless specifically advised by your healthcare provider, medications to avoid include:

- Benzodiazepines (such as Xanax or Valium)
- Muscle relaxants (such as Soma or Flexeril)
- Hypnotics (such as Ambien or Lunesta)
- Other prescription opioids

RISKS ARE GREATER WITH:

- History of drug misuse, substance use disorder, or overdose
- Mental health conditions (such as depression or anxiety)
- Sleep apnea
- Older age (65 years or older)
- Pregnancy

As many as 1 in 4 people receiving prescription opioids long term in a primary care setting struggles with addiction.

Findings from one study.

Be Informed!

Make sure you know the name of your medication, how much and how often to take it, and its potential risks & side effects.

LEARN MORE | www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html
SFUSD Athletics/CIF San Francisco Section
Opioid Information Fact Sheet Acknowledgement

California law requires students and their parents to receive a copy of the US Center for Disease Control’s Opioid Factsheet in order to participate in athletics. By signing this acknowledgement sheet, you acknowledge that you have received the Factsheet.

Student-athlete Name Printed  Student-athlete Signature  Date

Parent or Legal Guardian Printed  Parent or Legal Guardian Signature  Date