

What are Opioids?

What is an “Opioid?”

Opioids are a class of drugs that interact with receptors on nerve cells in the body and brain. Opioids include pain relievers as well as illicit street drugs. When taken, it can make the user feel euphoric and pain-free. Therefore, opioids can become highly addictive drugs.

Some opioids, such as heroin, are illegal. However, many opioids are legal and are prescribed by health care providers to treat pain; these include oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), hydrocodone-acetaminophen (Norco®), oxycodone-acetaminophen (Percocet®), codeine, and morphine, among others. Use of these prescription drugs for short durations, as prescribed by a doctor, is generally safe. However, misuse of prescription opioids can lead to addiction and even overdose or death. Misuse can include taking a drug that has been prescribed for someone else, taking a prescribed medicine differently than prescribed (for example, at a higher dose or for a longer period of time), or taking it to get high.

SOURCE: <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/drugs/opioids/index.html>

Prescription pain medications that are Opioids include:

- Oxycodone (OxyContin®, Percocet®)
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin®, Norco®)
- Codeine
- Oxymorphone (Opana®)
- Morphine (Kadian®, Avinza®)
- Fentanyl

Other Opioids include:

- Heroin
- Synthetic “street” Fentanyl



If you or someone you know has a substance use disorder, also known as addiction, we can help.

Call anytime, toll-free.



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SOURCES

HHS Office of Adolescent Health: <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/drugs/opioids/index.html>

National Institute on Drug Abuse: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids#summary-of-the-issue>

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