



Opioids:

what you need to know

Addiction to opioids often starts with a simple, legal prescription. Learn tips for managing your medications safely, and consider these alternatives for relieving pain.

From prescription to addiction



More than 11 million

Americans age 12 and older misused prescription pain medicine in 2016.

What to do when you're in pain

The current trend of opioid addiction can be frightening. Follow these 6 steps to safely address new pain:



Step 1: Ask your doctor about non-opioid pain relief options.



Step 2: Discuss any personal or family history of addiction or substance abuse with your doctor.



Step 3: If prescribed, take the opioid at the lowest dose and for the shortest duration.



Step 4: Stay in close contact with your doctor to monitor pain and side effects.



Step 5: Secure your medicines in a safe area, where members of your household cannot access them.



Step 6: Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about safe medication disposal.

6 ways to relieve pain without drugs

If you or a loved one is concerned about taking opioids, ask your doctor about these alternatives:



Deep breathing
or meditation



Exercise



Injections, procedures
or interventions
(at your doctor's
recommendation)



Massage and
complementary
therapies



Psychological
treatment



Heat
or ice

6 ways to spot addiction

Familiarize yourself with a few common signs of addiction:



1. Personality
changes



2. A change in
sleep habits



3. Lack
of hygiene



4. Frequent
flu-like
symptoms



5. Weight
loss



6. Decreased
energy or
motivation

Where to turn for help

If you have concerns about opioids, talk to your doctor or call Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital at **858-836-8434**. You can also speak with a counselor at the San Diego County Access and Crisis Line at **1-888-724-7240**.

From the expert

“The opioid epidemic is a significant problem in our communities, and it’s important for individuals to learn ways to treat pain that are not centered on a prescription.”

— Dr. Bianca Tribuzio, pain management specialist with Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group



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