



WHAT ARE PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS?

Opioids include legal prescription pain relievers, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, and more. They are used for severe pain resulting from trauma, extensive burns or surgery, and more. They are also used for patients with painful chronic or terminal illnesses.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), prescription opioids can do the following:

- **Reduce perception of pain**
- **Lead to drowsiness**
- **Lead to mental confusion**
- **Lead to nausea**
- **Lead to constipation**

The NIDA reports that opioids can also induce tolerance, which means that a person's body no longer responds to a certain dose of the drug. As tolerance grows, increasingly higher doses are required to achieve the same results.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.



Bangor Public Health and Community Services is the municipal public health department for the City of Bangor, Maine. We're here to help you, your family, and our region stay healthy.

If you're interested in learning more about opioid abuse and discussing non-opioid pain management options with your doctor, contact us:

BANGOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

bangorpublichealth.com/knowledge-is-power-

103 Texas Avenue
Bangor, Maine 04401

Having a Conversation about
PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS
with your Doctor



**IT'S YOUR BODY.
IT'S YOUR HEALTH.
KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.**

PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Though opioids are a pain management option, their addictive qualities can make them dangerous.

- ***In 2014, there were 1.9 million people whose substance use disorder involved prescription opioids.*¹**
- ***In 2014, there were 47,055 lethal drug overdoses. 18,893 of them were related to prescription pain relievers.*¹**
- ***The number of prescriptions for opioids escalated from around 76 million in 1991 to over 200 million in 2013.*³**

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, an average day in the United States looks like this:

- ***Over 650,000 opioid prescriptions are dispensed.***
- ***3,900 people abuse prescription opioids, including illicit opioids, such as heroin.***
- ***78 people die from an overdose related to opioids.***

WHAT ARE SOME ALTERNATIVES TO PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS?

Having a conversation with your doctor about non-opioid pain management options is the best way to be your own advocate.

Potential conventional and complementary alternatives can include the following:

- ***Non-opioid medications***
- ***Chiropractic treatment***
- ***Trigger points injections***
- ***Nerve blocks***
- ***Biofeedback/neurofeedback***
- ***Cognitive behavioral therapy***
- ***Acupuncture***
- ***Massage therapy***
- ***Nutritional counseling***
- ***Exercise regimens***
- ***Yoga***
- ***Tai Chi***
- ***Music therapy***

HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR DOCTOR

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Educate yourself about prescription opioids, their addictive qualities, and non-opioid pain management options.

INITIATE THE CONVERSATION

Let your doctor know that you would like to hear about non-opioid pain management options. Your doctor may have suggestions for your specific type of pain and potential treatment options available to you. The Centers for Disease Control reports that

“clinicians should consider the full range of therapeutic options for the treatment of chronic pain. However, it is hard to estimate the number of persons who could potentially benefit from opioid pain medication long term.”

LISTEN TO YOUR DOCTOR

Your doctor will be the best person to go to with questions. They may refer you to trusted sources for other pain management. If they suggest that you use prescription opioids for your pain, but if you would like a second opinion, you have that option as well.

¹American Society of Addiction Medicine

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

³National Institute on Drug Abuse

