

Creating Healthy Communities

Additional Resource: Understanding
the Opioid Crisis

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Key Words

Drug abuse or addiction—Dependence on a legal or illegal drug or medication.

Fentanyl—A synthetic opioid pain medication used for treating severe pain. It is 100 times more powerful than heroin and is often made and sold illegally.

Heroin—An illegal, highly addictive opioid drug processed from morphine.

Opioid—Natural or synthetic chemicals that interact with nerve cells in the body and brain, and reduce feelings of pain. This class of drugs includes the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and pain medications available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone and morphine. Opioid pain medications are generally safe when taken for a short time and as prescribed by a doctor, but because they produce euphoria in addition to pain relief, they can be misused.

Overdose—A fatal or non-fatal injury to the body that happens when a drug is taken in extreme amounts.

Source:

www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/opioids/terms.html

Facts

- Drug overdose is the leading cause of death for people under 50 in the United States.
- More than six out of 10 drug overdoses involve an opioid, and 91 Americans die every day from opioid overdoses.
- One of the factors that can contribute to drug overdose is the misuse of prescription drugs.
- Misusing prescription drugs can include:
 - Taking someone else's prescription, even for pain relief
 - Taking more than the prescribed dose of a drug, or taking it more often than was prescribed
 - Grinding pills into a powder to snort or inject
 - Taking prescription drugs for reasons other than pain relief
 - Mixing prescription drugs with alcohol or other drugs
- Prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are one of the most commonly abused substances by teenagers in the United States.
- Misuse of prescription drugs can lead to dependency or addiction.

Sources:

www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html

www.teens.drugabuse.gov

Additional Resources

www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html

[www.vimeo.com/freethechildren/review/238797572/591f47a6f5](https://vimeo.com/freethechildren/review/238797572/591f47a6f5)

www.who.int/substance_abuse/information-sheet/en

www.walgreens.com/itendswithus