



Local partnerships promoting wellness by addressing substance abuse statewide.

## Opioid Prevention Education

*Millions of Americans take opioid drugs routinely for pain relief. While effective painkillers, they can also be dangerous and addictive. Learn more about your prescription and how you can stay safe.*

### Opioids/Opiates

Opioids/Opiates work by blocking your brain’s sensation of pain. They can also affect the pleasure center of your brain, causing a sense of euphoria. When taken as directed, opioids can be very effective in relieving pain. However, the body soon begins to develop a tolerance for the medication, so the same dose of medication offers less pain relief. If you feel the need to take more of the drug than was prescribed to you - Talk to your doctor!

Opioids include: Vicodin, Percocet, OxyContin, Oxycodone, Methadone, Morphine, Opana, Dilaudid, and Fentanyl among others.

### Addiction Warning Signs

- Taking opioid medications for the feeling of pleasure/ euphoria or for emotional escape
- People suggest you cut back or quit using the medications
- Taking the medications other than orally- such as crushing and snorting, or injecting
- Having cravings when not taking the drugs
- Seeking early refills of prescriptions, prescriptions from other doctors, or drugs from other sources

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The Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN) is an association of the state’s 13 community partnership Regional Action Councils (RACs) that work to provide your community with education, training and advocacy for substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion



## **Tips for Pain Medication**

- Do not increase your dosage without consulting your doctor
- Be aware of potential interactions with other substances, such as alcohol, antihistamines, anti-anxiety drugs such as benzodiazepines, and sleep aids
- Do not sell or give your medications to others, or accept medications from other sources than a pharmacy
- Tell your doctor about any other drugs you take, including over-the-counter medicines and street drugs
- Tell your doctor if you have a history of substance abuse, an addictive personality, or are experiencing any of the warning signs of addiction
- Do not take if you have a cold, an asthma attack, bronchitis or other respiratory problems

*Watch out for overdose! Signs of an overdose include slow or shallow breathing, pale and clammy skin, snoring or gurgling while asleep and unresponsiveness*

## **Overdose Prevention Education**

### **1. KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TAKING**

Go online to [http://www.drugs.com/pill\\_identification.html](http://www.drugs.com/pill_identification.html) to learn what pill you are taking, and the dose. Know the difference between short-acting, long-acting, and extended release. Extended release contains more of the drug and lasts longer.

### **2. AVOID MIXING WITH ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS**

Do not mix opioid medications with alcohol or other drugs. Mixing can increase your risk of overdosing.

### **3. KNOW YOUR TOLERANCE**

If you have a period of not taking your prescribed opioid and then start taking it again TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR first! It may take less of the medication to have the same effect. Also, if you are sick, tired, haven't eaten, or have lost weight, your tolerance may be lower.

### **4. AVOID USING OTHER THAN AS DIRECTED**

Prescription medications can take a long time to have their full effect. Keep this in mind if you think the medication is not working fast enough. Never chew, cut, crush, or dissolve opioid tablets or capsules and talk to your doctor if you need to take more medication than prescribed to get pain relief - you may need a different dose or type of medication.

**REMEMBER:** *Always follow proper dosing and let your doctor know if you are in drug treatment or are taking any other medications!*

1. [http://www.drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DPA\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_911\\_Good\\_Samaritan\\_Laws\\_April2014.pdf](http://www.drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DPA_Fact_Sheet_911_Good_Samaritan_Laws_April2014.pdf)
2. <http://www.drugpolicy.org/911-good-samaritan-fatal-overdose-prevention-law>
3. <http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/cwp/view.asp?q=509650>
4. <http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/cwp/view.asp?q=509650>