

Opioids - Availability and Accessibility

- Commonly prescribed by doctors for teens as pain relief for sports injuries – 1 in 10 athletes report misusing painkillers.¹
- Prescribed for oral surgery (wisdom teeth).
- Nearly half of students in grades 7 - 12 have been prescribed opioids.²
- Half of teens who misuse opioids get them from friends, family and acquaintances.⁴

Names to look out for

Hydrocodone (Zohydro), Vicodin, Oxycodone, Oxycontin, Roxicodone, Percocet, Codeine, Morphine, Fentanyl



What can coaches do?

- Athletes should not be pressured to return to play too soon, as they may seek out pain medications to play through the pain.
- Early return to play can be associated with repeated injury and increased likelihood or length of prescribed opioid use.
- Communicate with athletes about injuries and treatment plans.
- Talk to athletes about the dangers of opioids and encourage them to talk to their physicians about alternative forms of pain relief.

If you notice any signs and symptoms, please talk to athletes about their injury and encourage them to talk to their physician about alternatives to opioids.

Do not wait. Dependency can take hold in 5 days.

What is the danger?

Danger of Dependence:

Opioids are highly addictive and users can quickly develop a tolerance, requiring higher and stronger doses, which can lead to heroin use.

Physical Danger:

Misuse of opioids can cause dramatic increases in blood pressure and heart rate, organ damage, difficulty breathing, seizures and even death.

Signs of dependence and/or misuse:

- Drowsiness
- Nausea
- Constipation
- Slowed breathing
- Slurred speech
- Flushing of the face
- Small pupils
- Lower grades
- Loss of interest
- Skipping class
- Acting out in class
- Sleeping in class

If you or someone you know needs help, call:

Ken, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Community in Crisis. (973) 876-3378

REACH NJ: (844) 732-2465 This 24/7 helpline serves as a one-stop shop to simplify the process for those seeking substance use services and their families.
<http://reachnj.gov/>

PARTNERSHIP TO END ADDICTION:
Get one-on-one help to address a child's substance use by sending a text to 55753 for a response within 24 hours.
Visit <https://drugfree.org> to schedule a phone appointment or get more information.

RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVES

Encourage athletes to talk to their doctors and parents about opioid alternatives and safety. Below are questions athletes are encouraged to ask:³

- Is a prescription opioid necessary to treat my pain? Could an over the counter pain reliever such as acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) in combination with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug be just as effective? For chronic pain, can we explore alternative treatments such as physical / chiropractic therapy or massage?
- How many pills are being prescribed and over how long a period? Is it necessary to prescribe this quantity of pills?
- What are the risks of misuse? (The prescriber should be able to answer this question for the specific drug being prescribed.)
- Should I be screened to determine my risk of substance use disorder before this medication is prescribed? If not, why not? Common risk factors include co-occurring mental health disorders such as depression or ADHD, as well as a family history of addiction or a recent trauma such as a death in the family or a divorce.



Important

Allow athletes to heal after injuries. It's better to miss a game than risk missing a season – or worse.

What to do in the event of an OPIOID OVERDOSE

Call 911 IMMEDIATELY

KNOW THE SIGNS

Pale face
Limp body
Bluish lips

Drowsiness
Unconsciousness
Slow breathing

Vomiting
Gurgling
Slow heart rate
Muscle spasms

BE PREPARED WITH NARCAN

NARCAN® (naloxone) can immediately reverse an overdose.

NARCAN® Nasal Spray is available from your pharmacist without a prescription from your doctor and is also covered by most major insurance plans.

Anyone who assists a person in need is protected from liability by the Good Samaritan Law.

Narcan is NOT a substitute for emergency care. Those suffering from an overdose will still need emergency medical attention.

1: High School Sports Participation and Substance Use: Differences by Sport, Race, and Gender. Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1067828X-2012.750974#U-Db39hOziU>

2: Opioid analgesic use disorders among adolescents in the United States. Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse. 24, 28-36.

3: When Opioid Pain Relievers Are Prescribed For Your Child: What You Should Know. Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. https://drugfree.org/parent-blog/parents-know-opioids-pain-relievers-prescribed-child/?utm_campaign=when-opioids-prescribed

4: 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



www.CommunityInCrisis.org