

The Opioids Epidemic

An epidemic is a disease that spreads rapidly among many people in a community at the same time.



According to most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), opioid overdoses killed 28,647 people in the U.S. in 2014. The epidemic continues to grow at an alarming rate of +15% a year. Opioid-related overdose deaths have taken a terrible toll on families and communities, causing more deaths than motor vehicle accidents.

19% of 12th graders surveyed said that it would be "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get heroin.



DID YOU KNOW?

Heroin was developed by scientists at the Bayer Company in 1897 in an effort to find a less addictive drug than morphine for treating painful diseases. However, heroin turned out to be ten times more potent—and addictive—than the drug it was meant to replace.



Fentanyl was first prepared and developed by Dr. Paul Janssen in 1959. It is estimated to be between 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. In many parts of the country, fentanyl is outpacing heroin in overdoses. Illicit fentanyl can be manufactured cheaply in laboratories.

Heroin and fentanyl are often mixed together in a deadly combination.

DID YOU KNOW?



On an average day in the U.S.:

- More than 650,000 opioid prescriptions are dispensed
- 3,900 people initiate non-medical use of Rx opioids
- 580 people initiate heroin use
- Over 90 people die of opioid overdose

Source: CDC

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Natural opiates (morphine, codeine) are derived from the opium poppy plant; **semi-synthetic** opioids (hydrocodone, hydromorphone, oxycodone, and more) are derived from naturally occurring opiates combined with opium alkaloids (morphine and thebaine); **synthetic** opioids such as heroin, methadone, and fentanyl are manufactured in laboratories from chemicals and alkaloids not found in nature.



Opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the brain and nervous system to produce pleasurable effects and relieve pain.

Fentanyl in the news...

In a statement responding to the overdose data, James J. Hunt, special agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration's New York Division, said that seizures of fentanyl had increased drastically in the last five years. "Not only are drug traffickers mixing it with heroin for street distribution," he said, "but drug suppliers are sending it in bulk form for resellers to sell in pill form or in bulk powder."

Prescription fentanyl is used to treat cancer pain and as an anesthetic for surgery. Even small amounts of it can be deadly. The drug is so powerful that law enforcement officers have to wear gloves when searching for it, as just a tiny bit can get into the skin and, depending on the amount, can be fatal.

Source: New York Times, Dec 29, 2016

AN EPIDEMIC BY THE NUMBERS

What are the annual costs of the opioids epidemic?

- **\$55 billion** in health and social costs related to abused prescription opioids
- **\$20 billion** in medical costs to treat overdose
- More than **300,000** deaths since 2000, and no end in sight
- An estimated **2.1 million** people in the U.S. are addicted to prescription opioids and an estimated **467,000** people are addicted to heroin

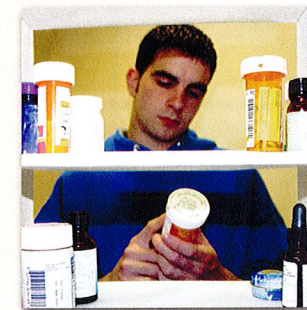


According to the CDC, over 90 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose (that includes prescription opioids and heroin).

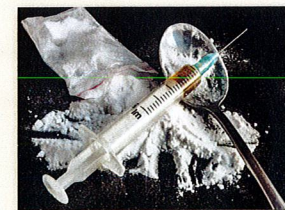
The Pathway to Death

Overprescription of opioid pain relievers

Health care providers write more than 225 million prescriptions per year for opioid pain medications. Research shows that most non-medical abusers first obtain prescription medication from family and friends. Does your medicine cabinet have opioid Rx's in plain view?



The path from Rx to heroin



Three out of 4 new heroin users report abusing prescription painkillers prior to using heroin. Heroin is cheaper and easy to obtain. When users can't get prescription opioids, they turn to heroin.

Source: The Monitoring the Future study, University of Michigan, 2012

Teens are at High Risk

Teens Mix Prescription Opioids with Other Substances

Nonmedical use of prescription (Rx) opioids by teens remains high, and a study shows that 7 out of 10 teen nonmedical users combine opioid medications with other drugs and/or alcohol. This puts teens at much greater risk of overdose.

7 out of 10 teen nonmedical users combine Rx opioids with other substances¹

The substances most commonly co-ingested were...



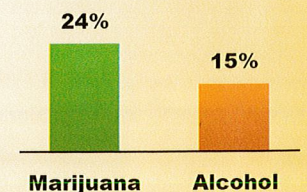
Teens who reported co-ingestion of Rx opioids with other drugs were²...

8X more likely to report abusing marijuana

4X more likely to report being drunk ≥ 10 times



Percent of teens that usually or always combine Rx opioids with marijuana or alcohol³

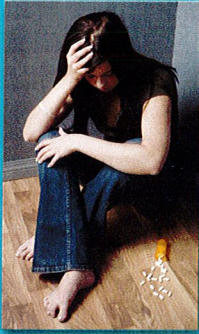


(1) McCabe et al., Drug Alc. Dep., 2012

(2) Compared to no past year nonmedical use

(3) Among nonmedical users of Rx opioids

How to Spot Prescription (Rx) Opioids Abuse



Here are the warning signs:

- Reports of lost/stolen medication
- Calls for early refills
- Seeks opioids from other sources
- Withdrawal symptoms noted at appointments
- Recurring requests for increases in opioids
- Increasing pain despite lack of progression of disease
- Dismissive of non-opioid treatments
- Over-sedation/somnolence
- Decreases in activity, functioning and/or relationships

Source: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/files/RecognizingOpioidAbuse.pdf>

HOW TO SPOT HEROIN ABUSE

If you suspect that a friend is using heroin, these are some warning signs to look for:

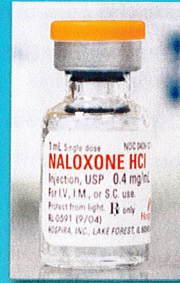
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts or long pants, even in summer, to cover up injection areas
- Track marks or bruises at injection sites (arms, legs, between toes)
- Constricted "pinpoint" pupils while high
- Extreme sleepiness or lethargy; nodding off

- Change in eating or sleeping patterns; weight loss
- Easily irritated or depressed
- Poor concentration and focus
- Losing interest in school, family, hobbies or sports
- Intense craving for sweets
- Changes in hygiene
- Money or valuables disappearing

Source: Office of National Drug Control Policy

Treating Overdose with Naloxone

Naloxone is a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose. Federal and local governments are intensifying their efforts to distribute naloxone to hospitals, police officers, EMTs, and other emergency workers. Prevention, treatment, research, and effective response to rapidly reverse opioid overdoses are critical to fighting the epidemic.



Save a Life!

If you or someone you know is having a bad reaction to any type of opioids, call the American Association of Poison Control's toll-free hotline right away:

1-800-222-1222



Your call will be routed to a poison control center in your local area.



In an emergency, call 911 immediately.

Opioid overdose death rates among women aged 15 to 24 increased by 116.7% from 2014 to 2015, the highest for any sex or age group.



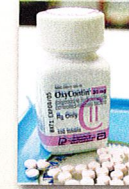
The CDC has identified addiction to prescription pain medication as the strongest risk factor for heroin addiction.

Pushing Back on the Epidemic

The Health and Human Services Opioid Initiative targets three priority areas to help tackle the epidemic and save lives:

1. Improve Rx Prescribing Practices
2. Expand Access to Treatment
3. Expand Availability and Use of Naloxone

Visit <http://www.hhs.gov/opioids/> for more information.



Data Sources and Learning More

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov

SAMHSA www.samhsa.gov

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
www.drugabuse.gov/

IMS Health National Prescription Audit 2016
www.imshealth.com/

SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health
<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FRR1-2014/NSDUH-FRR1-2014.pdf>

NVSS - National Vital Statistics System Homepage - CDC
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.hhs.gov/opioids

ASAM American Society of Addiction Medicine
www.asam.org/

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SPOTLIGHT on

Opioids Epidemic

