

# OPIOID FACT SHEET



## Know the Facts About Opioids

Opioid misuse in the United States is a big problem. Deaths from pain medicine overdoses have increased greatly over the past 20 years. One way to help reduce overdose deaths is learning facts about opioids.



## The Facts About Opioids and Heroin

- Prescription opioids are a type of pain medicine. They work like the illegal drugs heroin and opium. Opioids include: hydrocodone (Vicodin), oxycodone (OxyContin), morphine and codeine.
- Risk of death is higher when opioids are taken with alcohol or other medications.
- Opioids block pain signals that travel the nerves to the brain.
- Because opioids create changes to the brain, they can be addictive.
- Opioid misuse can develop quickly.
- Anyone can develop a problem with opioids.
- Opioid misuse can cause overdose and death.

## THE OPIOID CRISIS BY THE NUMBERS

**93,331** people died from drug overdose in the United States in 2020

**74%**  
(69,710) of the drug deaths involved an opioid

**9.7 MILLION** people aged 12 or older misused pain medicine in the last year

**50%** got the pain medicine from family or a friend

**AGES 18 - 25** misuse opioids more than any other age group

Children **AGE 12** misused opioids for the first time more than any other age group



Opioids are **NOT** the best medicine for tooth pain

**1,000** people are treated each day in emergency departments for opioid misuse



Visit our free online treatment locator, [www.TreatmentATLAS.org](http://www.TreatmentATLAS.org), or call 211 if you or a loved one has a problem with alcohol, opioids, or other drugs.

DentaQuest; sources: 1 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. 2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vital statistics rapid release. Provisional drug overdose death counts, 2021.

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