

# What you should KNOW ...

- Opioid meds can be addictive
- Don't share your meds
- Know who has access to your meds
- Talk to your doctor

Teens and others who abuse prescription medications often get them from their own cabinets or from the homes of grandparents or friends.

HC DrugFree • [www.HCDrugFree.org](http://www.HCDrugFree.org)



For information on where to dispose of unwanted or expired prescription medication in Howard County, go to:

[www.HCDrugFree.org](http://www.HCDrugFree.org)  
443-325-0040

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Message provided by HC DrugFree and the Howard County Health Department with funding from MD BHA & SAMHSA



## In the KNOW ... About Opioid Misuse

### Know the Facts

- ✓ Medication
- ✓ Risks
- ✓ Alternatives
- ✓ Storage & Disposal

Know the New Face of  
Prescription Medication Misuse



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# What you should KNOW ...

## Talk With Your Doctor \* Ask Your Doctor Questions

Patients taking prescription opioids are at risk for unintentional overdose or death or can become addicted. When a doctor prescribes medication to you (or to your loved one) for relief of pain, ask these questions about:

### The Medication

- ✓ What is the name of the medication?
- ✓ What side effects may I experience with this medication?
- ✓ What is it supposed to do?
- ✓ Is the dosage prescribed the least I need?
- ✓ Is there anything I should avoid (such as alcohol or driving) during treatment?
- ✓ How long will I have to be on this drug?

### What Is an Opioid?

Opioid pain medications are sometimes prescribed by doctors to treat pain.

Common types include:

- Hydrocodone (e.g. Vicodin)
- Oxycodone (e.g. OxyContin)
- Oxymorphone (e.g., Opana)
- Morphine

### The Risks

- ✓ Will this medication interact with medications I am already taking? (It's important to tell all your medical/dental providers the medications you currently take. For a form to carry with you, go to [HCDrugFree.org](http://HCDrugFree.org).)
- ✓ How addictive is the medication?
- ✓ What are some signs of dependency on the medication that I should know?
- ✓ What precautions can I take to decrease the risks of overdose or addiction?

4 in 5 heroin users  
started out  
misusing prescription  
pain medication.

—National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief: 2015:190:1-8. 9

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## Secure Your Medications

- ✓ Put your medications in a safe or lock box to keep them out of the hands of guests, family members or other people in your home.
- ✓ Dispose of expired or unwanted medications. Do not put them down the toilet as it is not safe for the environment. Instead, place them in plastic bags and take them to a designated collection site.

### The Alternatives

- ✓ What are other treatment options (such as exercise, non-opioid medications, and cognitive behavioral therapy) that can help me without the use of opioids?

And, tell your doctor about:

- ✓ the medications you have been prescribed in the past and their effects (positive and negative); and
- ✓ whether you, or a close family member, has a history of substance abuse.

You and your doctor are partners in any pain treatment plan. It is important to talk, ask questions, and discuss any problems that may cause you discomfort or concern.