

Easy-to-Read Drug Facts

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Pain Medicine (Oxy, Vike) Facts

Pain medicines relieve pain from surgery or injuries. You need a doctor's note (called a prescription) to buy some strong kinds of these medicines. Prescription pain medicines are legal and helpful to use when a doctor orders them to treat your medical problem.

But people sometimes take these without a doctor's prescription to get high or to try to treat themselves or their friends. Drug dealers sell these pills just like they sell heroin or cocaine. Some people borrow or steal these pills from other people.

Some people think that prescription pain medicines are safer to use than "street" drugs because they are medicines. Prescription pain medicine abuse can be as dangerous as heroin or cocaine use.

Oxycodone is one pain medicine that people often abuse. Sometimes it goes by the brand names OxyContin® or Percocet®. Another one that is often abused is hydrocodone. One of its brand names is Vicodin®.

Pain medicines are usually white, round, or oval pills. They can be taken whole, smoked, or crushed into a powder that is snorted or injected.

Like heroin, pain pills can cause a rush of good feeling when they're first taken, but they can also make you want to throw up. They can make you very sleepy. And you can get addicted to them.

Some slang names for oxycodone are:

- Oxy
- Cotton
- Percs

Some slang names for hydrocodone are:

- Vikes
- Vikings



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Signs of Pain Medicine Abuse and Addiction

Pain medicine abuse can make you throw up.

Pain medicine abuse makes the pupils (the black circle in the center of each eye) get very small.

Pain medicine abuse can cause constipation (trouble having a bowel movement).



When people smoke, snort, or inject pain medicines, they get a stronger reaction than they would if they swallowed the pills. The high might be stronger, but it's even more dangerous and can cause problems breathing.

People who get addicted to pain medicine need to take more and more of the drug to get the same high.

People who are addicted to pain medicine might steal pills from a loved one, get them from a friend, or buy them from a dealer. Some people might even visit different doctors for prescriptions and fill them at different pharmacies.

People who are trying to stop abusing pain medicine might:

- have pain in muscles and bones
- get chills
- throw up
- have diarrhea ("the runs")
- feel nervous, angry, or very sad
- be unable to sleep

They will feel a very strong need to take the drug.

Effects of Pain Medicine Abuse on Brains and Bodies

These are just some of the problems pain medicine abuse can cause:

You Stop Breathing

Pain medicine abuse can slow down or even stop your breathing.

Coma

Pain medicine abuse can put you in a coma. That's when nothing can wake you up.

Addiction

Prescription pain medicines can be as addictive as heroin—especially if they are smoked or injected. Then, even if you get treatment, it's hard to stay away from the drug. Fortunately, there are medicines that can help someone recover from prescription pain medicine addiction.

Overdose

Signs of a pain medicine overdose are cold and sweaty skin, confusion, shaking, extreme sleepiness, trouble breathing, and coma.

Death

Many people die from pain medicine overdoses. In fact, more people overdose from pain medicines every year than from heroin and cocaine combined.



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