Opioids are natural or synthetic chemicals that relieve pain by binding to receptors in your brain or body to reduce the intensity of pain signals reaching the brain. 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), and
- Morphine

Opioids can have serious risks including addiction and death from overdose.

As many as 1 in 4 people receiving prescription opioids long term in a primary care setting struggles with addiction.

4.3 million
Americans engaged in non-medical use of opioid pain medication in the last month

1 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2014

Many Americans suffer from chronic pain, a major public health concern in the United States. Patients with chronic pain deserve safe and effective pain management. At the same time, our country is in the midst of a prescription opioid overdose epidemic.

- The amount of opioids prescribed and sold in the U.S. quadrupled since 1999, but the overall amount of pain reported hasn’t changed.
- There is insufficient evidence that prescription opioids control chronic pain effectively over the long term, and there is evidence that other treatments can be effective with less harm.
IF YOU ARE PRESCRIBED OPIOIDS FOR PAIN:

‡ Never take opioids in greater amounts or more often than prescribed.
‡ Follow up with your primary health care provider within ___ days.
– Work together to create a plan on how to manage your pain.
– Talk about ways to help manage your pain that don’t involve prescription opioids.
– Talk about any and all concerns and side effects.
‡ Help prevent misuse and abuse.
– Never sell or share prescription opioids.
– Never use another person’s prescription opioids.
‡ Store prescription opioids in a secure place and out of reach of others (this may include visitors, children, friends, and family).
‡ Safely dispose of unused prescription opioids: Find your community drug take-back program or your pharmacy mail-back program, or flush them down the toilet, following guidance from the Food and Drug Administration (www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou).
‡ Visit www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose to learn about the risks of opioid abuse and overdose.
‡ If you believe you may be struggling with addiction, tell your health care provider and ask for guidance or call SAMHSA’s National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP.

Be Informed!

Make sure you know the name of your medication, how much and how often to take it, and its potential risks & side effects.

Talk to your health care provider about ways to manage your pain that don’t involve prescription opioids. Some of these options may actually work better and have fewer risks and side effects. Options may include:

‡ Pain relievers such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and naproxen
‡ Some medications that are also used for depression or seizures
‡ Physical therapy and exercise
‡ Cognitive behavioral therapy, a psychological, goal-directed approach, in which patients learn how to modify physical, behavioral, and emotional triggers of pain and stress.

Learn More | www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html
Visit TakeChargeOhio.org to find more tips and resources on safe medication and prescribing practices.