



Opioid Fact Sheet

Prescription opioids can be used to help relieve moderate-to-severe pain and are often prescribed following a surgery or injury, or for certain health conditions. These medications can be an important part of treatment but also come with serious risks. It is important to work with your health care provider to make sure you are getting the safest, most effective care.

What are Opioids?

- Opioids are drugs that reduce feelings of pain. Common prescribed opioids include hydrocodone, oxycodone, codeine, morphine, and fentanyl. Heroin is also known as an opioid.

What are some of the risks and side effects of opioid use?

- Prescription opioids carry serious risk of addiction and overdose, especially with prolonged use.
- Some side effects may include but are not limited to: physical dependence, increased sensitivity to pain, nausea and vomiting, constipation, dizziness, confusion and depression
- Risks are greater with a history of misuse or substance abuse, mental health conditions, sleep apnea, advanced age or pregnancy

What are some alternatives to Opioid therapy?

- Non-opiate medication such as NSAIDs like Ibuprofen and Naproxen
- Exercise and Physical therapy
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Alternative medicine such as acupuncture or massage therapy

How can I safely take opioids?

- Never take opioids in greater quantity than prescribed
- Never sell, share or use another person's opiate prescription
- Avoid mixing opioids with the following medications unless advised by your prescriber: Sedatives or tranquilizers, including benzodiazepines (Xanax or Valium), muscle relaxants (Soma or Flexeril), Sleeping pills (Ambien or Lunesta) or other prescription opioid pain relievers.
- Avoid alcohol while taking prescription opioids, as it can increase side effects and risk of overdose.
- Store medication out of the reach of others (children, family members, visitors)
- Safely dispose of any unused opioid prescriptions. For a complete list of locations visit, www.HelpIsHereDE.org under "drug drop box".

What are the State of Delaware opioid regulations?

- Opioid prescriptions supplied for more than 7 days require a signed Informed Consent and Treatment agreement by patient.
- A prescriber will check patient's prescription history to help make prescribing decisions to ensure patient safety.
- Follow up visits with prescriber to monitor how the medication is working, discuss side effects and assess for signs of addiction.
- A urine drug screen may be requested anytime at prescriber's discretion but is required every 6 months for chronic pain and long-term use of opiates. (Chronic pain is defined as any pain greater than 90 days)