

## WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are a group of drugs that affect the opioid receptors in the brain.

Some opioids, such as heroin, are illegal under any circumstances.

Other opioids are available legally by prescription to provide pain relief. Prescription opioids include: oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, and morphine.

All opioids affect the brain in a similar way, whether they were obtained legally or illegally.

## WHAT IS PRESCRIPTION OPIOID MISUSE?

Even legally prescribed opioids can be misused. Examples of misuse include:

- ▶ Taking an opioid in a way that was not prescribed, such as taking too many pills at one time, combining pills with alcohol, or crushing pills into powder to snort or inject them.
- ▶ Taking someone else's prescription opioid, even if you're doing so for the medication's intended purpose.
- ▶ Taking prescription opioids for the sole purpose of feeling good or getting high.

## WHY ARE TEENS AT RISK?

Many young people are tempted to experiment with drugs and alcohol during their teens. While not everyone who uses an opioid will become addicted, ninety percent of addictions start in the teen years.



**LENAWEE**  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
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**COMMUNITY MENTAL  
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## BEFORE GIVING YOUR TEEN OPIOIDS...

**ASK YOUR DOCTOR IF THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE.** For some situations, a prescription opioid is the best option. For others, a non-opioid alternative can provide effective pain relief for your teen.

**REQUEST THE LOWEST DOSE AND FEWEST PILLS NECESSARY.** Doctors may prescribe a full month's supply of pills, when seven days would be enough. If your teen's pain is unmanageable with the reduced dosage, you can always go back to your doctor.

**DISCUSS THE RISKS.** While most teens who are prescribed an opioid never become addicted, many addicts started with a legal prescription. When you talk to your doctor about side effects and medication interactions, include questions about addiction and overdose potential.

**TAKE CONTROL.** One way to reduce the risk of misuse is to take possession of the pills yourself and give them to your teen as needed. This removes the potential temptation for your teen to misuse.

**ACCEPT THAT SOME PAIN IS OKAY.** No parent wants to see their child in pain, but some discomfort after a medical procedure should be acceptable.