



You Have the Power to Prevent Opioid Misuse

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine, and many others.

Prescription opioids are one way to safely manage severe pain when taken as directed by a doctor.

However, misusing prescription opioids can put you at risk of addiction, overdose and death. Misuse means taking more medication than you were prescribed, taking it for non-medical use or taking someone else's medication. Combining opioids with alcohol and other drugs, like sleeping pills or cough medication, increases the chance of an overdose. Xylazine, also known as "tranq" or "tranq dope," may be combined with opioids, including fentanyl, which significantly increases the risk of a fatal overdose.

Fentanyl is a powerful opioid up to 50 times stronger than heroin. Accidental fentanyl overdose deaths (also referred to as poisonings) are on the rise in Texas. Keep yourself, your loved ones and your community safe by understanding the dangers of fentanyl and knowing how to reverse an overdose. Play the video to watch Becky Stewart share her story about the death of her 19-year-old son, Cameron, from fentanyl poisoning.

How to Stay Safe

- Only take prescription medication that is prescribed to you.
- Don't share with others.
- Take your medication exactly as your doctor prescribes.
- Don't use in greater amounts, more often or longer than directed.
- Keep medications in a safe place.
- Store prescription opioids out of reach of children and in a safe place, preferably locked, to reduce the chance that others will misuse them.
- Only take prescription medication obtained directly from a pharmacy.
- Avoid taking prescription opioids with alcohol or other drugs. This increases your risk of overdose.
- Safely dispose of expired or unused pills. Keep naloxone on-hand and learn how to use it. Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. Naloxone will not harm someone who is not overdosing on an opioid.