

OXYCONTIN: PROTECT YOUR TEENS. GET THE FACTS!

What is OxyContin?

OxyContin is a drug prescribed by physicians to treat moderate to severe pain. While prescription drugs may be helpful if they are used properly, taking OxyContin without a doctor's approval and supervision can be highly addictive and dangerous.

Although OxyContin is a prescription drug, it is also a narcotic (opiate) like heroin. People who get addicted to OxyContin often switch to heroin.

Among teens, OxyContin is also known as Oxy or OC.

Prescription drug misuse is more common than you think...



Most of the prescription drugs abused by teens come from family medicine cabinets and from friends.



1 in 5 teens has abused OxyContin or other prescription drugs.



4 out of 10 teens believe that getting high on prescription medications is not dangerous, but the truth is it can be just as dangerous and addictive as using heroin.

Prescription drugs that can be abused include:

Pain relievers (like Percoset or Vicodin)

Stimulants (like Adderall or Ritalin)

Sedatives and tranquilizers (like Mebaral, Valium or Xanax)

There are many medications that can be abused. These are the most common. For questions, call 1-800-327-5050.

"Experimenting, I discovered I could get high on OxyContin... I got to a point where I abused any prescription drug, even my parents'."

– Youth, 19 years old, Dorchester MA

How can I protect my children?



Keep your prescription drugs in a secure place. Ask questions if you notice certain prescription drugs are disappearing.



If your children take prescription drugs, keep control of the bottles. Talk to your school nurse about monitoring and giving your teen their medication during the school day.



Talk with your children about the dangers of abusing OxyContin and other prescription drugs.



Monitor Internet use in your home. Be alert—there are many sites on the Internet where prescription drugs can be purchased without a prescription.



Be a part of your child's life. Know where they go, with whom, and when. Set clear rules about alcohol and drug use, and enforce them.

MORE
INFORMATION
ON BACK!

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What can happen when teens misuse OxyContin?

- ! **Physical dependence.** Dependence develops quickly. The body adapts to the presence of OxyContin and goes through serious symptoms when use is reduced abruptly.
- ! **Severe symptoms when use is stopped,** including restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes, and involuntary leg movements.
- ! **Repeated use will lead to addiction to OxyContin.** Heroin addiction often follows.
- ! **You will notice changes in your teen's social, emotional and family life.**
- ! **Changes in breathing that can lead to death.**

How do I recognize prescription drug abuse?

- ☑ **Your teen has drugs (like pills) for unlikely reasons**
- ☑ **You notice prescription drugs are missing**
- ☑ **Your teen visits websites where he or she can purchase drugs or learn about drug use**
- ☑ **You notice changes in your teen's social behavior**

"When I ask teen addicts where they found their pills, many say they were their parents' prescriptions or that a friend gave them the pills."

– Drug Counselor, Dorchester MA

How can I learn more?

Visit the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health website at www.state.ma.us/dph/bsas (Office of Youth and Young Adult Services).

Request free guides for parents and youth from the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse, The Medical Foundation at maclearinghouse.com or call 1-800-952-6637.

Get Confidential help:

If you are worried about a child, friend, or family member who may be abusing OxyContin, alcohol or other drugs, call the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline at 1-800-327-5050.

Confidential help is available in multiple languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Help may be available even if they do not have insurance.



Prevent • Treat • Recover • For Life

www.mass.gov/dph/bsas

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