

THE FACTS

opioids for pain.

You are the most important part of your health care team. Ask questions and know the facts before you use opioids for pain.

[HelpIsHereDE.com](https://www.HelpIsHereDE.com) 



If you or someone you know in Delaware is struggling with addiction, call the Crisis Hotline in New Castle County at 1-800-652-2929, or in Kent and Sussex counties at 1-800-345-6785.

Or go to [HelpIsHereDE.com](https://www.HelpIsHereDE.com).

Talk to your health care provider about pain control.



KNOW THE

before you use



WHAT IS AN OPIOID?

An opioid is a strong prescription pain medication. Some possible side effects include nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, dizziness, constipation, increased pain, addiction, and accidental overdose.

COMMON NAMES OF OPIOIDS:

Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Norco)

Oxycodone (Percocet, OxyContin)

Morphine

Codeine (Tylenol #3, Tylenol #4)

Fentanyl

Tramadol (Ultram)

Methadone

Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)

Oxymorphone (Opana)

Heroin

Use your opioids only for the reason they were prescribed. Most people do not realize that over-the-counter medications may be all they need for pain control.

USE OPIOIDS SAFELY

- Ask your surgeon if you can use over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), or naproxen (Aleve) to treat your pain, decrease the length of time you take opioids, or reduce the amount you take.
- Use opioids if you still have severe pain or worsening pain that is not controlled with over-the-counter medications or other non-opioid prescriptions.
- As your pain starts to subside, wait longer between taking opioids.
- Use your opioids only for your surgical pain. Do not use your medications for other reasons.
- Do not mix opioids with alcohol or other medications that can cause drowsiness.
- Let your health care provider know about all medications you are using, including over-the-counter medications.
- Let your health care provider know if you have a history of substance use disorder, depression, anxiety, or chronic pain.
- Your opioids are only for you. Do not share your medications with others.
- Sharing or selling (diversion) of opioids is considered a felony.
- If you are pregnant, make sure to let your health care provider know, if they are considering using opioids for pain management.



UNDERSTAND PAIN GOALS AFTER SURGERY.

Make sure your surgeon provides you with information about your surgery, the medications you are being prescribed, and your expected levels of pain. Pain after surgery is normal and is usually worse for the first two to three days. The goal is to control your pain so that you can do the things you need to heal: walk, sleep, eat, and breathe deeply. Most people do not realize that over-the-counter medications may be all they need for pain control. Relaxation, meditation, and music can also help control your pain. Talk to your health care provider if you're unable to control your pain. Follow your health care provider's directions for use of ice packs, heating pads, or activities to assist in a speedy recovery, with reduced pain.

If you do use opioids prescribed for you, use them only for severe pain. Most people report using less than half of their opioids — and many do not use them at all. **Safely store opioids out of the reach of others in your household:**

- **Keep opioids in a locked location.**
- **Keep a count of how many pills you have left.**
- **Don't store opioids where they are easy to access.**
- **Properly dispose of unused opioids when you no longer need them.**



Be sure to dispose of unused prescription opioids properly. Visit any of the prescription drug drop boxes throughout Delaware to dispose of yours. Visit [HelpsHereDE.com/Get-Help/Prescription-Drug-Drop-Box](https://www.HelpsHereDE.com/Get-Help/Prescription-Drug-Drop-Box) to find a drop box near you. Or talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about other drug-disposal options, like safe deactivation pouches such as Deterra and DisposeRx. **Do not flush unused opioids in toilets or throw them out in the garbage.**

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER:

- ❓ **How long should I expect to have pain?**
- ❓ **Can I use over-the-counter medications, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), or naproxen (Aleve), instead of opioids to treat my pain, decrease the length of time I take opioids, or reduce the amount I take?**
- ❓ **What else can I do to help control my pain (e.g., ice, rest, elevation, exercise, or lifting or activity restrictions)?**
- ❓ **Could I be a candidate for a pain management procedure, such as a nerve block, a local anesthetic catheter, or an epidural, as an opioid alternative?**
- ❓ **Whom do I call if my pain is not controlled or is getting worse, or if I am having side effects from my opioids?**
- ❓ **Can I have fewer opioid pills since I have small children or teenagers in the house?**

CAUTION • CAUTION • CAUTION • CAUTION • CAUTION

OPIOID USE CAN PUT YOU AT RISK OF DEPENDENCE, ADDICTION, AND OVERDOSE!

Dependence can start within three days!