

Opioids are narcotic pain relievers that require a prescription from a healthcare professional. When taken as prescribed for short periods of time under the care of a medical professional, opioids can be a safe and effective pain management tool.

Learn more about opioids at [Mouthhealthy](#).

Common Questions About Opioids

What types of drugs are considered opioids?

Opioids can include hydrocodone (Vicodin), oxycodone (OxyContin or Percocet), morphine, and codeine.

Why are opioids addictive?

Opioids work by making your brain feel like your pain is lessening. They also make your body release dopamine. Dopamine causes you to feel pleasure, which could lead to addiction. Abusing opioids is extremely dangerous. According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), even one large, misused dose can cause “severe respiratory depression and death.” The American Dental Association is working with the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry to help educate dentists and physicians on safe prescribing of opioids and help stop this trend of addiction.

How will my dentist help me manage pain?

Over-the-counter medicines, like ibuprofen and acetaminophen, can be effective for pain relief following dental procedures. Still, there is no one-size-fits all approach to treatment. To help your dentist decide what course of action is right for you, make sure you update your health history form, talk to your dentist about medications you are currently taking and ask plenty of questions. Feel free to include your primary medical doctor in the conversation. If you are in recovery or struggled with addiction in the past, tell your dentist. Let your dentist know if anyone in your family has struggled with addiction.

What should I do if I am prescribed an opioid?

If you are prescribed an opioid, ask your dentist or pharmacist the following questions before filling the prescription:

- What is the goal of this prescription?
- When and how should I take these?
- How long should I take these drugs?
- Are there any risks for me from this medication?
- What do I do with any extra medication?

Know the Risks and Find Treatment and Support

The following is a list of resources that are available for individuals and/or family and friends of individuals who may seek help with substance use and related disorders:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Risks and How to Reduce Them](#). This page provides information on how to reduce the risks that can be associated with opioids.

[Opioid Therapy and Different Types of Pain](#) Learn about types of pain - acute, subacute, and chronic and options for treatment.

[ADA Mouthy Healthy infographic](#) on Disposal Do's and Don'ts

[FDA Disposal of Unused Medicines](#): What You Should Know. Learn how to dispose of unused or expired drugs.

National Resources

- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMSHA\) Treatment Locator](#): SAMSHA provides treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental health problems and/or substance use disorders.
- [Narcotics Anonymous](#): Narcotics Anonymous helps those trying to overcome any type of drug or alcohol dependence using their twelve-step program.
- [Nar-Anon](#): Nar-Anon provides support and resources (meetings) for friends and family of people living with substance use disorder/addiction.
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#): Alcoholics Anonymous provides support through their twelve-step program to help individuals overcome a drinking problem.
- [Al-Anon](#): Al-Anon provides information and resources (meetings) for friends and family of an alcoholic to help them recover from the effects of their drinking problem.
- [Smoking Cessation](#): Smokefree.gov from the National Cancer Institute helps you or someone you care about quit smoking.
- [Suicide Prevention](#): Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24/7 service that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- [Naloxone](#): If you or someone you love is struggling with opioid addiction, having Naloxone on hand and knowing how to administer it can save lives.

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Providers
Clinical Support
System



Opioid
Response
Network