

What Parents Need to Know: Indiana's Opioid Epidemic

What are opioids?

Opioids are painkillers. You may be familiar with some of the common names like Vicodin or Percocet, but there are many different brand names for opioids. Heroin is also an opioid. Opioids are America's biggest drug problem.

Where do teens get opioids?

The majority say that home medicine cabinets are their source of drugs. And they are starting young, with most prescription drug abusers saying they started before they were 15 years old.

America has only 5% of the world's population, but we consume 80% of the world's painkillers, so it isn't hard for teens to find painkillers. If you have prescription painkillers in your home it is important that they are locked up.

**250% increase in
heroin overdose deaths
from 2011-2013**

**4 out of 5
heroin users report
starting out abusing
prescription medications**



Almost half of all teens incorrectly believe that prescription drugs are much safer than illegal street drugs

Heroin and Teens

If a teen is addicted to opioids and is buying prescription pills, they can sell for \$25 to \$50 each, but heroin is cheap and very easy to access. It's a faster and stronger high for about the cost of a large latte.

Heroin can be injected, but it can also be smoked or snorted. Teens often have a misconception that if they don't inject heroin that they won't become addicted. However, they may choose to inject heroin because it gives a faster high. Injection puts them at risk for HIV and Hepatitis C.

If teens overdose and survive, they can have lifelong damage to their heart and other organs and they can have brain damage.

Who is at risk?

All teens are at risk of opioid addiction. Opioid use results in not being able to feel happy without using these drugs and an intense craving for more opioids. It is important to talk to your children about the dangers of taking prescription painkillers.

If your teen is showing signs of depression, or is very stressed over a situation like a break up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, their grades, or getting into college, they may be at an even higher risk for opioid addiction.

