



TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLER ABUSE

- Discuss effective alternatives to prescription painkillers with your physician, dentist, or prescribing medical professional.
- Take medicine only if it has been prescribed for you. Do not borrow other people's medications.
- Talk to your kids about the dangers of taking painkillers not prescribed for them.
- Take your medication only as long as it's needed, and never take more than directed by your prescribing medical professional.
- Store your prescription painkillers securely – ideally, locked in a cabinet or drawer.
- Dispose of unused, expired, or unwanted medication properly. For a list of Drug Take Back locations in Minnesota, visit our website DoseOfReality.MN.gov.

For even more of a Dose of Reality with regard to prescription painkillers, talk with your doctor, dentist, pharmacist, or prescribing medical professional, or visit DoseOfReality.MN.gov. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

CONSIDER THIS DOSE OF REALITY:

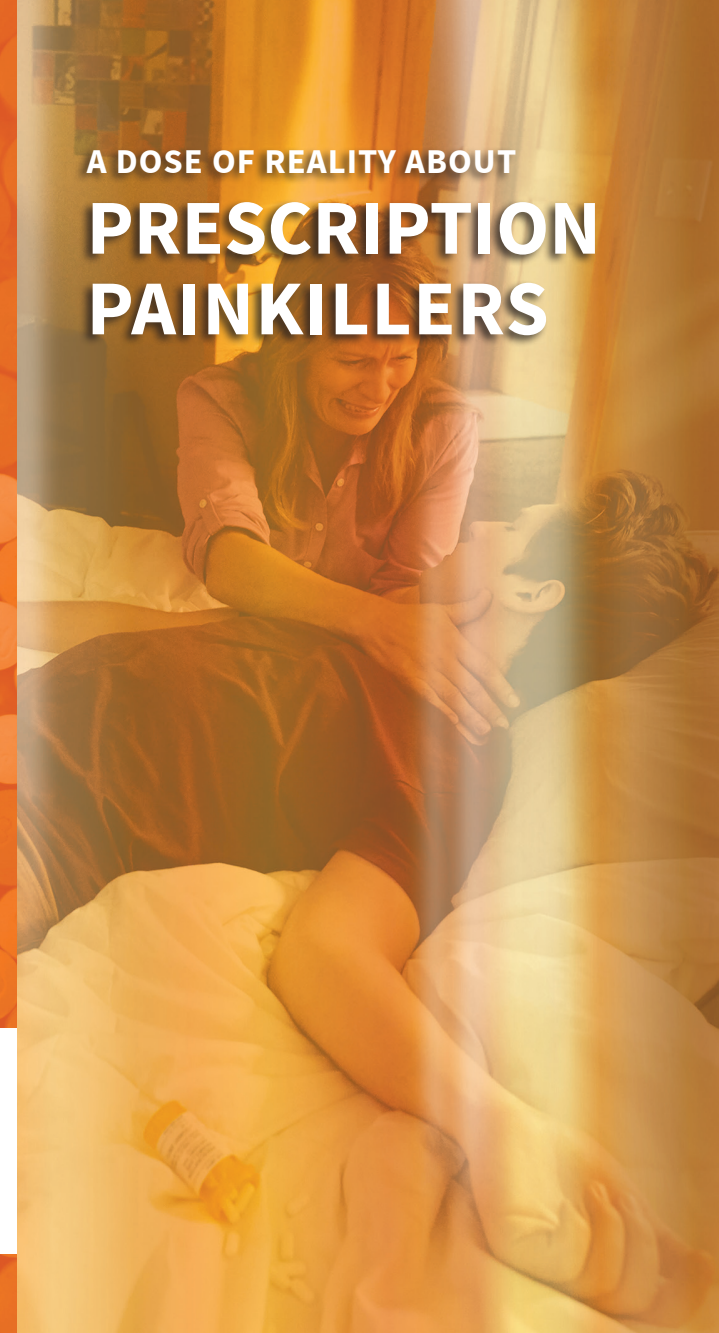
- EVERY 25 MINUTES, A BABY IS BORN SUFFERING FROM OPIOID WITHDRAWAL.
- EVERY DAY, MORE THAN 40 PEOPLE DIE FROM A PRESCRIPTION OPIOID OVERDOSE.
- EVERY YEAR, PRESCRIPTION OPIOID ABUSE COSTS EMPLOYERS NEARLY \$42 BILLION IN LOST PRODUCTIVITY.



Learn more at: DoseOfReality.MN.gov

A message from the offices of Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and Anoka County Attorney Tony Palumbo

A DOSE OF REALITY ABOUT PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS



DoseOfReality.MN.gov

MYTH: PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS ARE COMPLETELY SAFE BECAUSE THEY ARE PRESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR.

DOSE OF REALITY:

- **MOST HEROIN USERS BEGIN BY ABUSING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.**
- **PRESCRIPTION OPIOID OVERDOSES HAVE QUADRUPLED SINCE 1999.**

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are generally prescribed to treat pain. Common prescription opioids include painkillers like hydrocodone (e.g., Vicodin®), oxycodone (e.g., OxyContin® and Percocet®), morphine, fentanyl, and codeine. Opioids are susceptible to addiction and abuse because they trigger chemical processes in the brain that create intense feelings of pleasure. Repeated exposure to opioids alters or “hijacks” the brain and increases the risk of an overdose and death.



In some cases, people become addicted to their own prescribed painkillers. In other cases, people misuse painkillers prescribed for someone else or bought on the street. Opioids can be dangerous. Sales of opioid painkillers quadrupled since 1999 and so have the number of deaths from these drugs. Painkillers can be gateway drugs. Nearly 80% of heroin users previously abused prescription painkillers. The risk of overdose and death increases exponentially when prescription painkillers are combined with other drugs or alcohol.

DOSE OF REALITY: More than half of people who abuse prescription painkillers get them through friends or relatives.

Most people don't realize the risks and dangers of prescription opioid painkillers. Don't share your pills with someone else or take pills prescribed to someone else. Keep your prescription painkillers secure and out of sight. Store them in a lockbox, safe, or locked medicine cabinet.

DOSE OF REALITY: Avoid flushing prescription medications down the toilet or drain.

Dispose of your unused prescription drugs by taking them to one of the many pharmacies or local law enforcement agencies that have secure collection receptacles. Find a drug take-back location near you by visiting DoseOfReality.MN.gov.

DOSE OF REALITY: Someone who takes prescription painkillers as prescribed by a doctor can be at risk for addiction.

Signs of opioid dependence include: significant time spent obtaining and using opioids; use of increased dosages; withdrawal symptoms when reducing use; and inability to reduce opioid use despite the drugs interfering with daily activities.

If you or someone you know is struggling with opioid addiction, talk to your doctor and seek help:

SAMHSA Treatment Services Locator

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Minnesota Department of Human Services

651-431-2460

www.mn.gov/dhs