



State of Alaska
Bill Walker, Governor

Department of Health and Social Services
Valerie Davidson, Commissioner
Jay C. Butler, MD, Chief Medical Officer

Office of Substance Misuse and Addiction Prevention
Andy Jones, Director

www.opioids.alaska.gov

Revised August 15, 2017

This brochure was supported by grant NU17CE924872-02, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.



PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS: WHAT ALASKANS NEED TO KNOW



**Keep yourself, your family
and your community safe.**

WHAT IS AN OPIOID?

Heroin is an opioid known for its devastating impact on our communities. Prescription opioids, however, can also carry risks of addiction and overdose. People who use heroin often report they first misused prescription opioids, so it's important to be careful with these medications. These include pain medications like hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, fentanyl and codeine. If you're in pain, be sure to:

TALK TO YOUR MEDICAL PROVIDER.

Your medical provider cares about your health and safety. If you're in pain, you'll work together to determine the best possible treatment for your condition.

Be sure to talk about:

- Medications, alcohol and other substances you are using
- Known risk factors for addiction you may have (such as a family history of addiction)
- Ask about non-opioid options that may work for you

If you're prescribed an opioid by your provider:

- Learn how to use your medicine exactly as prescribed
- Ask how to safely start and stop using opioids
- Ask about side effects and risks associated with your prescription
- Call your provider if you have difficulty stopping the use of an opioid

YOUR OPIOIDS ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.



SECURELY STORE all medications, especially opioids, out of sight and out of reach of children, teens and others who may misuse them. Keep track of medications so you know if any are missing. Properly dispose of unused opioids instead of saving them for later use.



If none of these options are available, you can remove the medication from its original bottle, put it in a disposable bag or container and mix it with an undesirable substance (coffee grounds, cat litter). Add water, seal the container and throw it away in the garbage.



PROPERLY DISPOSE of your unused medication:



Take your medications to a drug take-back location/event.



Or, dispose of unused opioids using a disposal bag designed to deactivate opioids. Sometimes available at no cost at health centers and pharmacies, these bags contain activated charcoal that, when combined with water, create a convenient at-home disposal option.



Never throw your opioids in the garbage without using one of the methods above. Never flush your opioids down the toilet.



DON'T SHARE

your pain medication with family, friends or anyone at all. Your medication is prescribed by your medical provider with your body in mind. It is not safe for others to take. Sharing opioids may cause addiction, trouble with the law, overdose and death.

Visit www.opioids.alaska.gov to learn more about the signs of opioid addiction and find resources available to you.