

## What are opiates?

Doctors prescribe opiates to help patients manage pain. Opiates block your brain's sensation of pain. Opiates can also affect the pleasure centers of the brain causing a sense of joy and euphoria.

Taken as directed by a doctor, these medications are safe and rarely lead to dependency. However, long-term use or misuse of opiate medications can result in physical dependence.

Common opiate medications are:

- Codeine
- Dilaudid
- Lortab
- OxyContin
- Stadol
- Darvon
- Duragesic
- Methadone
- Percocet
- Vicodin
- Demerol
- Fentanyl
- Morphine
- Percodan

## Could I be abusing or dependent on opiate medications?

Physical dependence on opiate medications can occur when the body adapts or gets used to the presence of the drug. More of the drug is required to achieve the same pain blocking effect. Someone who is physically dependent may experience withdrawal symptoms when they stop using the drug.

You can abuse opiate medications by taking more than is needed for pain control or by taking it to get high. Repeated abuse of opiate medications can lead to dependency.

Abuse and dependency can result in life-threatening respiratory depression.

## Use and Consequence of Opiate Pain Medications

Find out if your use of opiate pain medications can cause problems or dependency. Take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below.

### DAST-10 Assessment

The questions below are about your possible involvement with drugs during the past 12 months.

“Drug use” means (1) Using your medications in excess of the directions or (2) Using your medications to get high. “Drug use” does not include alcoholic beverages.

#### In the past 12 months

YES | NO

1. Have you used drugs other than those required for medical reasons?  YES  NO
2. Do you abuse more than one drug at a time?  YES  NO
3. Are you always able to stop using drugs when you want to?  YES  NO
4. Have you had “blackouts” or “flashbacks” as a result of your drug use?  YES  NO
5. Do you ever feel bad or guilty about your drug use?  YES  NO
6. Does your spouse (or parents) ever complain about your involvement with drugs?  YES  NO
7. Have you neglected your family because of your use of drugs?  YES  NO
8. Have you engaged in illegal activities in order to obtain drugs?  YES  NO
9. Have you ever experienced withdrawal symptoms (felt sick) when you stopped taking drugs?  YES  NO
10. Have you had medical problems as a result of your drug use (e.g., memory loss, hepatitis, convulsions, bleeding, etc.)?  YES  NO

Score 1 point for each question answered “YES,” except for question 3 for which a “NO” receives 1 point.

**My Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

I have my score, so now what do I do?

<b>Score 0-2</b> You scored in the low-risk range	<i>Stay within the recommended prescription limits.</i>
<b>Score 3-5</b> You are in the at-risk or high risk range	<i>Reduce your use of opiate medications to within the recommended prescription limits – see <b>tips below.</b></i>
<b>Score 6 or more</b> You are in the severe risk range	<i>Your use of opiate medications could result in significant harm or even death. Consult your doctor immediately.</i>

While stopping or reducing your use of opiate medications can be hard, most people can stop or limit their use. You can:

- Change certain behaviors that lead to misuse.
- Get support from family, friends, and community.
- Seek professional help from your doctor.