



OPIOIDS



In the human body, we have natural pain killers known as endorphins. Endorphins work in our body for pain relief, calmness, and happy feelings.



Similar to endorphins, **opioids** are a group similar drugs that act on our Central Nervous System to produce the similar feelings. However, there are a variety of opioids: natural and synthetic. Natural opioids are produced by the poppy seed plant *Papaver somniferum* and have limited effects on our body. As medicine advanced, synthetic opioids have been made with ingredients to produce more powerful, long-lasting effects. Due to these changes, addiction to these substances make it harder to control.

Strong opioids
=
10x strength of weak opioids

32%

15%

93%

of Rocky Mountain American Indians*

agree that the opioid crisis is serious

Agree that people of any age, income, education, and gender can abuse prescription meds

Know prescription medications can become addictive

INTERESTING FACTS



Strong opioids include the following: fentanyl, methadone, morphine, oxycodone

Weak opioids include the following: codeine, dihydrocodeine, tramadol



The *longer* you use opioids, your *risk for addiction increases*.

Addiction can cause harm to physical, psychological, and social well-being.

Opioids are commonly taken :

- orally--the effects are gradual (10-20 minutes)
- injected--effects are quicker (~1 minute)

Intensity of opioids depend on opioid type and your opioid history

Side effects of opioid use:

- constipation
- decreased breathing
- difficulty concentrating
- nausea/vomiting
- sweating
- loss of appetite
- death (severe case)

Treatment is available and effective

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness

References: Drug Enforcement Administration (2021), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (2021), National Institute on Drug Abuse (2021)
*Data collected by RMTLC TOR project (March-May 2021)



For More Information:
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