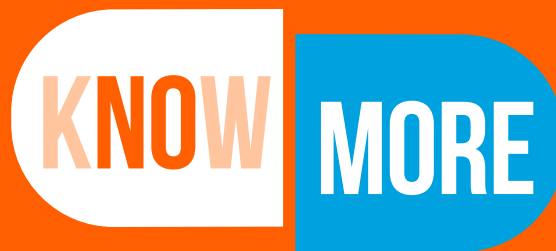
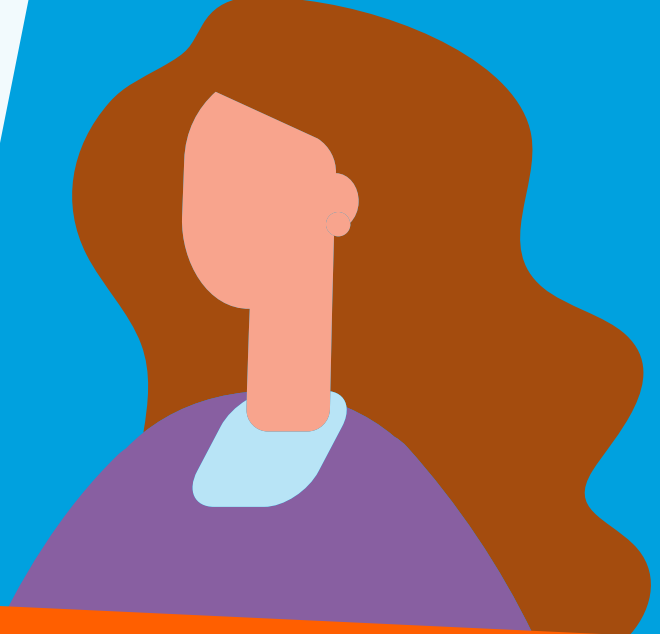


COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

OPIOIDS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



ABOUT OPIOID ADDICTION

Genesee County Opioid Prevention Project



GREATER FLINT HEALTH COALITION



KnowMoreGenesee.org

OPIOIDS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you have recently been prescribed an opioid, are concerned about or struggling with opioid addiction or know somebody that is, this resource will help you better understand opioids. Know more about opioids and get help if needed.

Opioid Epidemic

The opioid epidemic, a growing nationwide public emergency, does not discriminate the individuals and communities that it impacts. Genesee County is no exception. According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, 131 Genesee County residents died of an opioid overdose in 2017, up from 120 in 2016¹. Many more are treated for an opioid overdose. As community members, parents, neighbors, and friends, there is an opportunity to become better informed and help those struggling with addiction.

What are Opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphine, and many others.² While many people benefit from using prescription opioid pain medications to manage pain under a health care provider's



direction, there is a risk of dependence and addiction. There is also a risk to the community when prescription drugs are diverted for improper use by others.

Know the Risks and Side Effects of Opioid Use

Prescription opioids have a serious risk of addiction and overdose, especially with long term use. The use of prescription opioids can have a number of side effects even when taken as directed. They include:

- Tolerance – meaning you might need to take more of a medication for the same pain relief
- Physical dependence – meaning you have symptoms of withdrawal when a medication is stopped
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression
- Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy, and strength
- Itching and sweating³

Know the Signs and Symptoms of Opioid Addiction or Overdose

Opioid addiction is a disease that affects your brain and your behavior. At first you have control over your choice to start using drugs, however over time your brain actually changes in certain ways creating an urge to use the drug. There are many signs and symptoms of opioid misuse and addiction. They can include: poor coordination, drowsiness, shallow or slow breathing rate, nausea, vomiting, constipation, physical agitation, poor decision making, abandoning responsibilities, slurred speech, sleeping more or less than normal, mood swings, euphoria (feeling high), irritability, depression, lowered motivation, and anxiety attacks.⁴

¹ "The Opioid Epidemic in Michigan." Michigan Substance Use Disorder Data Repository, mi-suddr.com/opioids/.

² "What Are Opioids?" HHS.gov, www.hhs.gov/opioids/prevention/index.html.

³ "Prescription Opioids: What You Need to Know." CDC, www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/AHA-Patient-Opioid-Factsheet-a.pdf

⁴ "Opioid Addiction - Pain Relief - Signs of Addiction." Familydoctor.org, www.familydoctor.org/condition/opioid-addiction/.

It is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose and act fast to help save a life. Signs of an overdose include:

- Small, constricted “pinpoint pupils”
- Falling asleep or loss of consciousness
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Pale, blue, or cold skin

An opioid overdose requires immediate medical attention. If you think someone is experiencing an overdose, even if you aren’t sure, it is best to treat it like an overdose. Follow these steps:

- Call 911 immediately
- Administer naloxone, if available
- Try to keep the person awake and breathing
- Lay the person on their side to prevent choking
- Stay with him or her until emergency workers arrive⁵

Know Naloxone and the Law

Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. It can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped due to an opioid overdose. Naloxone has no effect on someone who does not have opioids in their system, and it is not a treatment for opioid use disorder. Naloxone should be given to any person who shows signs of an opioid overdose or when an overdose is suspected. If you or a loved one is at risk for an opioid overdose, it is important that you have naloxone on hand. Talk to your physician or pharmacist about naloxone when receiving a prescription for opioids.⁶

During a drug overdose, a quick response can save a life. However, people illegally using drugs sometimes do not seek medical attention during an overdose for fear of alerting police of their illegal drug use. In order to prioritize saving lives, Michigan passed a Good Samaritan law in 2016. Michigan’s Good Samaritan law prevents drug possession charges against those that seek medical assistance for an overdose in certain circumstances. This law makes saving lives the priority during a drug overdose, not criminal prosecutions of illegal drug users.⁷

Know that You Have Treatment Options for Managing Pain

Although prescription pain medications can be effective at treating certain types of pain, there are different treatment options and



therapies available. Opioids are not the first-line treatment for chronic pain, with the exception of cancer treatment, palliative care, and end-of-life care. Nonopioid treatments can provide relief to those suffering from chronic pain and are safer. Talk to your doctor about your options to best manage your pain. Alternative treatments may include:

- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic care
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Massage therapy
- Meditation and relaxation
- Physical therapy
- Yoga⁸

Know How to Practice Responsible Use of Opioids

Whether you are currently taking opioids or considering opioids to treat (acute) pain after surgery or for chronic pain, it is important that you take steps to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community.

- Be proactive to learn about your options and communicate with your doctor.
- Be honest with your doctor about your health, drug, and alcohol history, as well as your family history.

⁵ “Preventing an Opioid Overdose.” CDC. www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/patients/Preventing-an-Opioid-Overdose-Tip-Card-a.pdf

⁶ National Institute on Drug Abuse. “Naloxone.” NIDA. 1 Jan. 2019. www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/naloxone.

⁷ “Michigan’s Good Samaritan Law.” MDHHS. www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2941_4871_79584_79585_79587_79590-409680--,00.html

⁸ “RX Pain Medications, Know The Options, Get the Facts.” SAMHSA. <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma17-5053-1.pdf>

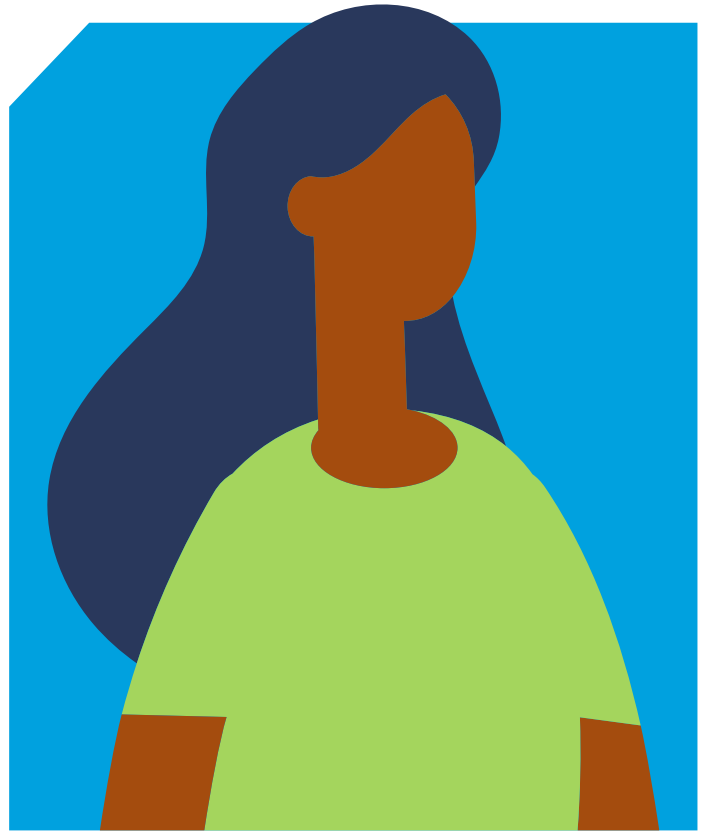
- Always follow your pain care plan and keep your appointments for follow-up care.
- Never take opioids in higher amounts or more often than prescribed.
- Do not combine opioids with alcohol or other drugs that cause drowsiness, such as: benzodiazepines, muscle relaxants, and sleep aids.
- Never share or sell prescription opioids.⁹

Know How to Properly Store and Dispose of Opioids

Learn how to properly store and dispose of unused medications. Always keep your opioids in a safe, locked place, out of reach of family, children, visitors, and pets. Always keep your opioids in their original labeled container, even when you travel. Remember your children and grandchildren! Keep them safe.

If you have unused opioids at the end of your treatment, take steps to safely dispose of them to protect your family and community. Find an approved prescription drug collection site near you, find a medication Take Back event, or properly use your household trash as a last resort. Prescription drug drop boxes can be found at the following Genesee County locations:

- Burton City Police Department, 4090 Manor Drive
Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:00pm
- Clio City Police Department, 505 W. Vienna Street
Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:00pm
- Davison City Police Department, 200 E. Flint Street
Mon-Fri 8:00am-12:00pm & 1:00pm-4:00pm
- Fenton City Police Department, 301 S. Leroy Street
Available 24 hours
- Flint Police Department, 210 E. Fifth Street
Mon-Fri 10:00am-6:00pm
- Flint Township Police Department, 5200 Norko Drive
Available 24 hours
- Flushing City Police Department, 725 E. Main Street
Mon-Fri 9:00am-4:30pm
- Genesee Township Police Department, 7244 N. Genesee Road
Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:00pm
- Grand Blanc Township Police Department, 5405 S. Saginaw Street
Available 24 hours
- Mott Community College Public Safety, 1401 E. Court Street
In front of Public Safety Building
- Metro Police Authority, 5420 Hill 23 Drive
*Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:00pm*¹⁰



Know That There is Support Available

Remember that opioid addiction is a disease and those suffering should be treated with care and compassion as with any other disease. It is a chronic brain disease that can be managed with medical treatment. Talk to your doctor for help and refer to the **Quick Reference Referral Guide for Substance Use Treatment** locations. Consider finding a support group to come together with others facing addiction and the road to recovery. It may be helpful to learn from the experiences of others and receive emotional and social support.

- Genesee County Families Against Narcotics holds weekly Nar-Anon support meetings every Thursday evening at 7pm. 3515 North Belsay Road, Flint, MI 48506. All are welcome to attend. www.familiesagainstnarcotics.org/genesee
- Additional Genesee County Narcotics Anonymous meeting sites and times can be found online at www.michigan-na.org/flint-area/meetings/

Take the next steps to seek treatment for yourself or your loved one. There is help.

⁹ "RX Pain Medications, Know The Options. Get the Facts." SAMHSA. <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma17-5053-1.pdf>

¹⁰ "Proper Disposal: Stop Prescription Abuse." *Proper Disposal | Stop Prescription Abuse*. www.stopprescriptionabuse.com/proper-disposal.html.