



THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC:
SEEKING SOLUTIONS
IN NORTH DAKOTA



PARENTS: PREVENT OPIOID PRESCRIPTION ABUSE

1. Talk to your children. Educate and warn them about the potential dangers of taking medications that are not prescribed for them, including addiction and overdose.
2. Be clear with your expectations about drug and alcohol use and follow through by supporting healthy decisions they make.
3. If your son or daughter needs medications while at school, request an 8 to 12 hour dose so you can administer them at home. If medications must be taken during school hours, give them to the school nurse.
4. Ask your doctor if medications prescribed to your family members have a potential for abuse.
5. Take regular inventory of medications in a secure location away from your children. Consider purchasing a lockbox at your local pharmacy to store medications that can be abused.



WE ALL HAVE A ROLE. TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Our nation and North Dakota are in the midst of the deadliest drug addiction epidemic in our history. It is affecting individuals and families across all layers of American society. It is the crisis of drugs called opioids, which includes both legal (OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin and fentanyl) and illegal (heroin) opioid drugs.

In 2016, more than 59,000 Americans died from a drug overdose. That's over 150 people every day. Here in North Dakota, the number of overdose deaths has doubled over the past two years.

Many people are reluctant to believe that their friends or family members may be misusing or developing an addiction to prescription opioids. Anyone who experiments with these powerful medications is at risk for negative consequences, including addiction and overdose.

North Dakota has a proud history as a resilient problem-solving state. Together, we as North Dakotans are finding solutions to difficult problems like this one.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF OPIOID ADDICTION:

- Medications missing
- Indifference and lack of engagement
- Dramatic mood changes
- Falling in and out of sleep
- Change in friends and unusual risk-taking

Opioid addiction may start when a clinician prescribes opioids following an injury; by having access to painkillers in the family medicine cabinet; or by obtaining them from friends.

Although these medications are effective when prescribed and taken appropriately, they can be misused and can lead to significant negative consequences, including addiction, overdose and death. Some people who are addicted may transition to heroin, which is less expensive and widely available.

LOCK. MONITOR. TAKE BACK.

Be responsible with your medication.

Lock. Keep medication out of sight and in a safe and secure place.

Monitor. Keep track of medication and take only as directed.

Take Back. Drop off unused medication at local Take Back locations. They are widely available at pharmacies and law enforcement locations. Find a location near you by visiting prevention.nd.gov/rxabuse.

Alternative Methods to Dispose

Dropping off at a Take Back location is recommended but if you are in need of an alternative option you can remove medications from their containers, crush them and mix them with coffee grounds or kitty litter. Place the mixture in an unmarked container, like an empty can or sealable bag, and throw the container in the trash.

Do not flush medications down the drain unless the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs you to do so.

RESOURCES:

Treatment works. If you or a loved one are having a problem with prescription opioids, reach out, get help, find hope.

Find free addiction information, resources and assistance.

- **Online:** prevention.nd.gov/stopoverdose
- **Call:** 211
- **By reaching out to your local public health unit.**

Free educational videos and materials are also available at www.bcbsnd.com/seekingsolutions



www.NDCARING.org