

## What is rehab?

Rehab, short for rehabilitation, is about support and recovery from addiction. Drug rehab centers offer both inpatient and outpatient services, and keep treatment confidential.

Depending on how severely a person is addicted to a substance or substances, an inpatient drug rehab center may be the best option.

The first step at an inpatient drug rehab center is medical detox, which lasts anywhere between 3 days to 2 weeks. Those who've been using drugs heavily are especially in need of professional medical help to rid their body of the substance, since they've built up a tolerance and are likely to experience serious withdrawal symptoms.

Without such structured support, undergoing the detox process can be intense, painful, and sometimes deadly. Part of the point of going to an inpatient drug rehab treatment facility is so that professionals can help. They're trained and prepared to manage symptoms, keeping patients safe and comfortable as they undergo detox and withdrawal.

After detox, you begin therapy. Most rehab programs offer both individual and group therapy, and both are recommended. In individual therapy, you meet with a licensed mental health professional who helps you navigate the recovery process, tailoring guidance specifically to you and your situation. This, along with group therapy, is proven to be one of the best treatment options for drug addiction.

Group therapy allows those struggling with addiction to share their stories with one another in a safe environment. You connect with others who've been through similar experiences, and learn how to move forward without being alone. Many report group therapy as enlightening and uplifting, since it gives you for the opportunity to heal and grow in a truly non-judgmental setting.

## A brighter future

No one plans on being an addict. The experience can be overwhelming and scary, especially since it can start to take over every aspect of life. It's easy to feel alone and out of control, like things will never get better. Such feelings can trigger depression, anxiety and sometimes even suicidal thoughts. If you ever need to talk to someone call 1-800-273-8255.

Ultimately, drug rehab is a chance to turn your life around. If you or a loved one needs help getting clean, know you're not alone. Millions of others have been through the same thing and come out on the other side, safe, happy, and sober. With the right support, you can be addiction-free and lead a vibrant and meaningful life. You deserve to thrive.

The sooner you or someone you love gets help, the better.

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## **LEARN THE FACTS, BREAK THE CONNECTION, STOP THE ABUSE:** **REDUCING OPIOID ABUSE IN NW MONTANA**

## **OPIATE ADDICTION: WHO NEEDS REHAB?**

### What are prescription painkillers?

Prescription painkillers are opiate pain medications. An opiate is a synthetic version of an opioid, also known as a narcotic. Opiate or opioid painkillers are usually prescribed by doctors to help people with severe, debilitating pain, such as those suffering from advanced stages of cancer, or those with bone disease or neurological illnesses.

Prescription painkillers include:

- Oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan)
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lorcet, Lortab)
- Codeine
- Morphine
- Methadone
- Fentanyl (Duragesic)
- Pethidine (Demerol)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
- Propoxyphene (Darvocet/Darvon)

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, since 1999 there has been a 300% increase in the number of people dependent on prescription painkillers. Opiate addiction is entrenched across the United States; over the last 18 years, overdose deaths involving opiates have nearly quadrupled. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 64,000 people died from overdoses in 2016, and the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that of the 140 Americans who die from drug overdoses every day, 91 are due to opioids.

In Montana, more than 700 people have died from opiate overdose since 2000, according to the Department of Justice.

### **How do you know if you're addicted to a prescription painkiller?**

Prescription painkillers (opiates) are some of the most frequently prescribed drugs in America, making them some of the most available to abuse. High levels of addiction can be credited to the combination of their euphoric effect and how quickly dependence can happen. An estimated 4.7 million people are addicted to prescription painkillers in the U.S.

Many times, someone who becomes addicted to a painkiller like OxyContin or Vicodin didn't start out abusing it, but rather took it exactly as prescribed. An addiction can develop over time, and as many as 7% of those who receive prescriptions for opiates or analgesic painkillers will become addicted.

Signs and symptoms of prescription painkiller abuse include:

- Euphoria (feeling high)
- Drowsiness, sometimes to the point of nodding off
- Slowed or shallow breathing
- Nausea and vomiting
- Flushed or itchy skin
- Constipation
- Headache
- Dry mouth
- Sweating
- Slurred speech
- Confusion or poor judgment

Those addicted to prescription drugs like these often build up a **tolerance** to them, meaning it takes more and more of the substance over time to get the same effects as the person had at first. Addicts will often also undergo **withdrawal** when they stop taking the drug. For example, people who suddenly stop taking a prescription painkiller to which they've become dependent can experience muscle and bone pain, depression, diarrhea, and insomnia if they aren't properly tapered off the drug with **medical detox**.

Another sign someone has developed a prescription painkiller drug addiction is "doctor shopping", or switching healthcare providers to get more or higher doses of the substance. They become obsessed with getting access to the substance, and may falsify prescriptions and/or use multiple pharmacies in an attempt to get more of it.

### **What are the risks of prescription painkiller addiction?**

One of the biggest risks that come along with these drugs is death by overdose. Because the drugs suppress a person's ability to breathe, users can actually die from drug-induced suffocation.

Another major risk involves combining opiates with alcohol. For example, taking certain long-acting forms of hydrocodone like Vicodin along with alcohol can cause rapid release of the drug, resulting in high blood levels that can be lethal. *Never mix alcohol or any other drugs with prescription painkillers.*

The psychological and emotional impact of drug addiction is just as far-reaching as the physiological effects. People who are addicted may have problems at school, work, or in the home, since they will often sacrifice time or energy to getting the drug instead of concentrating on important life tasks.

Finally, when users don't have access to their preferred drug (like OxyContin or Percocet), they'll often start taking other drugs, reinforcing the addiction cycle. They can start to spin out of control, eventually finding that their entire life starts to revolve around getting, having, and using the drug.

It's important to understand that for an addict, consuming drugs is compulsive. It's not something within their control (even if it started out as within their control). Addiction is not something to be ashamed of, and no one is "bad" or "wrong" for having developed an addiction. The important thing is to get help, especially since the cost of not getting it is potentially deadly.