

## 9. Are heroin and prescription painkillers basically the same thing? What's the difference?

In interviews, people who switched from painkillers to heroin said they made the transition because painkillers became unavailable, because heroin is cheaper, and because they were desperate for relief from opiate withdrawal.

In part because of prescription drug abuse, heroin use is growing dramatically. There are now more than 1 million heroin users in the United States. Heroin-related overdose deaths have more than quadrupled since 2010.

There is evidence that, as prescription painkillers become less freely available, heroin use is increasing. There has been a worrying rise in heroin deaths over the last few years. Nationally, deaths from heroin have tripled in the last five years. (Montana heroin use and abuse has also increased but not so dramatically).

For further information about Opioid Prescription Drugs:

### Local Resources.

Watch these PSAs produced by the STOP Prescription Drug Abuse Coalition:

<https://www.facebook.com/593042374181027/videos/vb.593042374181027/881467602005168/?type=2&theater>

<https://www.facebook.com/593042374181027/videos/vb.593042374181027/598319913653273/?type=2&theater>

### In Flathead County.

1. Contact the Flathead Valley Chemical Dependency Clinic at 756-6453 or the Montana Center at 756-

8488 or Community Medical Services at 855-203-6352 to learn about in and out-patient addiction services.

2. Contact the NW Montana Drug Task Force at 758-5878.

3. Contact a Suboxone treatment provider at 206-3885. (Suboxone treats addiction to narcotic pain relievers)

### In Lake County.

1. Contact Autumn Diller with Western Montana Mental Health at 532-9170.

2. Contact a Suboxone treatment provider in St. Ignatius at 249-3198 or in Missoula at 532-9800.

### In Lincoln County.

1. Contact Vel Shaver with FVDC at 293-7731.

### In Sanders County.

1. Contact Jennifer McPherson with FVDC at 827-4241.



For further information about the Community Action Partnership of NW Montana contact:

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## ***LEARN THE FACTS, BREAK THE CONNECTION, STOP THE ABUSE:***

***REDUCING OPIOID ABUSE IN NW MONTANA***

## **FACT SHEET ON OPIOID PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

### **1. What are "opiates" or "opioids?"**

Opioids usually come in pill form and are prescribed to reduce pain. Medical doctors and dentists prescribe them after surgery or to help patients with severe pain or pain that lasts a long time. When opioids are taken as prescribed by a medical professional, they are relatively safe and can reduce pain effectively. However, dependence and addiction are still potential risks when taking prescription opioids. These risks increase when these drugs are abused. Painkillers are one of the most commonly abused drugs by teens, after tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana.



Listed below are common types of opioids:

Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, Lorcet)

Morphine (Kadian, Avinza, MS Contin)

Codeine

Fentanyl (Duragesic)

Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)

Meperidine (Demerol)

Methadone

## **2. Is it risky to use any prescription painkiller?**

All medications carry risks. Pain medications that contain synthetic opiates (also known as opioids) are no exception.

If you are prescribed opioid medications by your doctor, thoroughly discuss the risks and benefits of the medication. Use the medication only as prescribed and do not share it. This significantly reduces the likelihood that you will develop an addiction

## **3. Does everyone who develops an addiction to prescription painkillers move on to heroin?**

Not everyone who uses prescription painkillers does or will use heroin. However, according to the CDC, approximately 3 out of 4 new heroin users report having abused painkillers prior to using heroin.

There is evidence that, as prescription painkillers become less freely available, heroin use is increasing. There has been a worrying rise in heroin deaths over the last few years. Nationally, deaths from heroin have tripled in the last five years.

## **4. What can I do to make sure my child doesn't get involved with drugs?**

There is no guaranteed protection against substance use, but there are protective factors. These factors reduce the chances that your child will use drugs or alcohol and develop an addiction.

Parents often feel that their influence over their adolescent children is minimal. In fact, research and clinical experience show that parents can have a significant influence over their children's decision to use drugs or alcohol. Parents are advised to build a trusting relationship with their children, regularly discuss the risks of substance use, and model healthy behaviors for children to learn from. Parents should also be aware of and monitor children's risk factors. Children with a family history of addiction, a mental health condition, an impulsive/risk-taking personality, and/or a history of trauma are at greater risk of substance use and addiction.

## **5. What's the difference between treatment and Twelve Step support groups?**

Twelve Step support groups are a form of peer support. They are the most widely available mutual support groups for people trying to break the cycle of addiction and those in recovery. In addition there are other peer support options including: Women for Sobriety (WFS), SMART Recovery (Self-Management and Recovery Training), and Secular Organizations for Sobriety/Save Our Selves (SOS).

Professional treatment involves a structured program over time that includes credentialed counseling for substance abuse which is

often accompanied by closely supervised medication. This can occur in a treatment facility for in-patient or out-patient clients. Out-patient treatment can also be received in a variety of community based locations.

## **6. What's the difference between detox and treatment?**

Detox is a process of managing the acute physical symptoms of *withdrawal*. Detox may be medically managed in an inpatient facility or hospital. It may also occur on an outpatient basis. Detox is a short-term process, usually lasting less than a week.

Treatment addresses the biological, psychological, and social aspects of addiction. It should last longer than detox. Research tells us that most addicted people need at least three months in *treatment* to really reduce or stop their drug use and that longer treatment times result in better outcomes.

Depending on the type of treatment, detox may be the first step in a drug treatment program. But detox alone with no follow up is not treatment.

## **7. What should I do with old medications?**

There are several safe ways to dispose of unused medications. Many places exist in NWMT, like City Hall, County Houses, Walgreens, that have medication drop boxes which allow citizens to turn in unused drugs in protected locations.