

## Using Opioids Safely

If you are prescribed opioids:

- Always take them as directed by your doctor or pharmacist
- Avoid mixing them with other substances such as alcohol, muscle relaxers, or drugs like Xanax or Valium
- Store them in a safe and secure space where they cannot be accessed by others
- Never share or sell your medication to others
- Dispose of any unused medication properly at a pharmacy or police station

We offer a variety of substance use treatment and recovery services. If you or a loved one is struggling with opioid dependence or misuse, call **855-99-MCCMH (855-996-2264)**.



**If you are struggling with a substance use disorder, we provide treatment services and support.**

**Call 855-99-MCCMH (855-996-2264) to learn more or schedule an appointment.**



## Understanding Opioids

### Knowing the facts can save a life

Doctors often prescribe opioids to treat pain after surgery or injury. Opioids can be safe for short-term use when taken as prescribed by a doctor, but it is crucial to understand their risks and side effects.

### What are Opioids?

Commonly prescribed opioids include oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and methadone. Heroin is also a type of opioid.

While opioids can be an important part of treatment, they also have serious risks and potential side effects.



**MACOMB COUNTY**  
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Macomb County Community Mental Health programs and services are supported and funded, in part, by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). MCCMH is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and operates under the direction of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners and the Macomb County Community Mental Health Board.

MCCMH centers are barrier-free, and offer TTY access, American Sign Language communication, and other language translations.



mccmh.net



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## Risks and Side Effects of Opioid Use

Opioids are very addictive, and your body may begin to build a tolerance for them. This means that you will need more opioids to treat the same amount of pain. This can lead to misuse, dependence, or even overdose.

Other side effects of opioids include:

- Confusion
- Depression
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Nausea, vomiting, or dry mouth
- Sleepiness, dizziness, or slowed breathing

People who have misused drugs, have a substance use disorder, or had an overdose are at higher risk for side effects. People 65 and older also have an increased risk.

Buying opioids illegally is dangerous. Drugs purchased from the illegal market are often mixed with substances like fentanyl, which can be life-threatening.



Opioids carry a high risk of overdose. Anyone taking opioids can overdose, even if they take them correctly. An overdose can be deadly and requires immediate medical assistance.

## How to Recognize an Opioid Overdose

Opioids slow down breathing and heart rate, which can lead to overdose. The signs of an opioid overdose include:

- Blue, gray, or purple fingernails or lips
- Slow, irregular, or stopped breathing
- Pale, clammy skin
- Dizziness and confusion
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Lack of response to voice or touch
- Drowsiness or difficulty staying awake

If you think someone has overdosed, call 911 right away and, if available, administer naloxone.

## What is Naloxone?

Naloxone is a medicine that can save lives by reversing an opioid overdose. It can be given as an injection or nasal spray, helping to restore normal breathing for 30 to 90 minutes. A popular brand name for naloxone is Narcan.

It's important to call 911 after using naloxone. Some opioids are very strong and may require more naloxone or additional medical treatment.

Naloxone kits are available free of charge at all MCCMH locations.

