



Take Charge Ohio

An Initiative for Pain Medication Safety



Department of
Health



Take Charge of Pain Medication Safety

Before you take any type of prescription pain medication, it is important to be aware of the risks involved as well as safe medication practices, including tips on how to properly consume, store, and dispose of medication.

Did You Know?



Every 2 hours, an Ohioan dies from an unintentional drug overdose.



In 2021, more than 319 million opioid doses were dispersed to Ohio patients.



Fentanyl was involved in 81% of overdose deaths in 2020, often in combination with other drugs.



86% of Ohioans died from unintentional drug overdose involving Opioids in 2020.

Be Aware of The Risks

Before taking a prescription medication, it is important to be aware of the risks involved, including:

- Psychological dependence or addiction
- Unintentional overdose
- Serious side effects, such as sedation, nausea, or vomiting
- Individuals stealing or accessing your prescribed medications

Other Ways to Safely Manage Pain

Before being prescribed pain medication, ask your doctor about other ways to manage pain:



Non-Opioid
Pain Medications



Non-Medication
Treatment

Safe Pain Management Practices Start with You

If you do decide to take pain pills, it is important to do the following:

- Only use prescription medications as directed by a health professional.
 - Most pain medications are prescribed as needed for pain and can be safely stopped if the pain has subsided, even if there are some pills left. If you have questions or concerns about stopping your pain medication, please do not hesitate to contact your physician to discuss.
 - Never share or use someone else's prescription medication. Remember that sharing or taking medications that are not prescribed by a doctor may be a felony.
 - Always store and dispose of your medication safely to prevent others from taking medications.
 - Be a good example to those around you by modeling safe medication habits and discussing medication safety with your family, friends, etc.
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Safe Storage Practices

After being prescribed a prescription pain medication, consider the following medication storage options:



Keep medication in a **locked** container, drug safe cabinet, or drawer, and out of the reach of children and pets.



If you have leftover medication, it is important to safely dispose of any unused or remaining pills.



Store your medication in the original container and out of sight.

Safe Disposal Practices

Once finished with a prescription pain medication, consider the following medication disposal options:



Read the materials that came with your prescription to see if there are any special instructions for disposing of unused medication.



Take advantage of local drug takeback events or community drop boxes like [pharmacy.ohio.gov/disposal](https://www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/disposal).



Dispose of unused medications in the trash with an unpleasant substance such as coffee grounds or cat litter.



Visit [FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov) to find a list of medications that can be flushed.

Warning Signs: Recognizing When Someone Is In Danger

When it comes to the misuse or abuse of prescription pain medication, **anyone can be at risk**. It is an issue that affects all populations and it is important to recognize the warning signs when someone you know is in danger. Indicators include:



Frequent physician visits



Depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder



Aggressive behavior to obtain prescriptions



Smoking or frequent abuse of alcohol



Personal or family history of substance abuse



Sharing medications



Increasing dose without first discussing with a health care provider

If you think you or a loved one is misusing pain medications, there IS help.

Helpline: 1-877-275-6364

Text Crisis Line: 4hope to 741741