

THE DANGER OF OPIATES

PRESCRIPTION PAIN RELIEVERS

Long-term Effects of Opiate Use

Opiates include numerous substances such as heroin and morphine, but they all have the

OPIATES ARE AMONG THE MOST ABUSED DRUGS IN THE UNITED STATES AS THEY'RE EASY TO GET HOLD OF, READILY PRESCRIBED, AND VERY ADDICTIVE--A DANGEROUS COMBINATION.

same method of action. These highly addictive substances are called opiates because they are derived from chemicals found in the sap of the opium poppy - one of the biggest moneymakers in the Afghan mountains. Prescription opioids, which have essentially the same mechanism of action as natural opiates, include drugs such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, and fentanyl.

Opiates are extremely useful in the management of pain and for cough

suppression in the case of severe lung conditions, but they do have a dark side. They are **among the most abused drugs in the United States** as they're easy to get hold of, readily prescribed, and very addictive--a dangerous combination.

Short-Term Effects of Opiates

The biggest advantage to opiates is that they're very effective at controlling pain, and they're relatively cheap. Morphine has been around for over a century, yet it still is used regularly to control pain.

Opiates usually produce a "high" of some type; the faster-acting they are, the more intense the high they produce. Heroin produces a very intense high thanks to its very short duration of action: its half-life is between 15 and 30 minutes. Morphine is much longer, lasting from 4 to 6 hours.

MOST PEOPLE DO EVEN KNOW THEY ARE ADDICTED OR DEPENDENT ON IT BECAUSE THEY THINK "IT MUST BE OK SINCE MY DOCTOR IS ORDERING IT!"



The short-term effects of opiate use can include:

- Feelings of euphoria
- Pain relief
- Drowsiness
- Sedation

The side effects of opiate abuse are fairly varied and may include:

- Drowsiness
- Lethargy
- Paranoia
- Respiratory depression
- Nausea

Because of the intense high produced by the interaction of several opiates and the brain, the drugs remain extremely addictive, sometimes causing measurable symptoms of addiction in under three days.

Opiates also cause your irises to relax, creating pinprick or pinpoint pupils. This is one of the big giveaways of opiate abuse, and it's hard to disguise.

Because of the way opiates often reduce your reaction times, **driving while under the influence of opiates** is often dealt with harshly, and you could lose your freedom along with your license. In some states, the mere presence of an illegal drug is enough to determine that you were driving while intoxicated, although the federal government is pushing states toward defined limits, just like with alcohol.

Long-Term Effects of Opiates

Long-term effects can include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal distention and bloating
- Constipation
- Liver damage (especially prevalent in abuse of drugs that combine opiates with acetaminophen)
- Brain damage due to hypoxia, resulting from respiratory depression
- Development of tolerance
- Dependence



All information contained within this newsletter is intended for educational purposes only. Members should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something they may have read on this website. Information obtained from drugabuse.com website.