

Prescription Opioid Information For Parents, Other Caregivers, and Students

When a student is injured while playing sports, has a tooth pulled, or has other pain issues, the doctor, dentist, or other health care provider may prescribe an opioid to relieve pain. Even when opioids are used as prescribed, they can lead to a substance use disorder.

Prescription opioids have effects similar to heroin, and prescription opioid use is a risk factor for heroin use. Nearly 80 percent of Americans who use heroin (including those in treatment) reported misusing prescription opioids before using heroin.

How can you protect your student? Before they are prescribed an opioid, ask the health care provider about non-opioid medications, and ways to relieve pain without medication. Be aware of common prescription opioids like oxycodone (OxyContin[®], Percocet[®]), hydrocodone (Vicodin[®], Lortab[®]), codeine, tramadol, morphine, and others. If you are unsure if the medication is an opioid, **ask**.

If your student is prescribed an opioid:

1. Ask the health care provider to prescribe the lowest dose and the smallest amount needed.
2. Give the medication exactly as prescribed and only to the person it was prescribed for.
3. Keep all prescription medication locked up. Two-thirds of teens and young adults who report abuse of prescription medicine get it from friends, family, and acquaintances.
4. Monitor medications. Never let your student share, take more medicine than prescribed, mix with other drugs (including alcohol), or use for purposes other than prescribed.
5. Dispose of any leftover medication at any Carroll County Drop Box Location. Go to www.clearthecabinet.com for locations.
6. Know the warning signs of opioid misuse or other substance use:
 - Mood changes
 - Problems at school
 - Changing friends
 - Lack of interest in things they enjoy
 - Memory lapses, poor concentration, slurred speech

For a full list of warning signs: <https://drugfree.org/article/look-for-warning-signs/>

7. Request a prescription for Naloxone from your health care provider. Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can quickly restore the breathing of a person experiencing an opioid overdose. To receive training and a free Naloxone kit, call Access Carroll at (410) 871-1478 and sign up for a free training the third Wednesday of each month. You can also get Naloxone at any Maryland pharmacy without a prescription.

For more information about how you can help your student make healthy choices and lower their risk of substance abuse and addiction, warning signs of substance abuse, and what to do if you are worried about your student, call the Carroll County Health Department Substance Abuse Prevention Office at (410) 876-4803 or visit: <http://cchd.maryland.gov/behavioral-health-alcohol-and-drug-use-prevention-services/>

Additional Resources:

<https://drugfree.org/article/look-for-warning-signs/>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources>

<https://beforeitstoolate.maryland.gov/talktoyourdoctor/>

**Carroll County
Health Department**



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