

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) states that young adults, ages 18 to 25, are the biggest abusers of prescription opioid pain relievers, along with ADHD stimulants and anti-anxiety drugs. The rate of overdose deaths among teens in the United States climbed 19 percent from 2014 to 2015. Most of these overdose deaths were unintentional and driven primarily by opioids, including prescribed painkillers, such as oxycodone, as well as illicit drugs like heroin and street fentanyl.

The NIDA reports that, in 2014, more young adults died from prescription drug overdoses than from any other drug, including heroin and cocaine combined, and many others needed emergency treatment.

Children and adolescents who are being treated with opioids after surgery or dental procedures, or to treat pain associated with injuries, could potentially benefit from alternative pain treatments rather than prescription opioids. Research has shown that acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are just as effective.

As a parent, you have a right to know the immediate and long-term dangers of these types of drugs. In the short term, overdosing can be fatal, as can mixing prescription medicine with over-the-counter medicine and/or alcohol. Over time, prescription opioids and other prescription medicines can become addictive. Relying on prescription medicines at a young age to help “manage” pain can establish a lifelong pattern of dependency and prevent teens from learning important coping skills.

# HOW TO PROPERLY DISPOSE OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

According to National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) data on youth and young adults, more than 5,700 youth in 2014 reported using prescription pain relievers without a health care provider’s guidance for the first time.

If you have unused prescription medications, you should safely dispose of them by taking them to one of Delaware’s drug take-back locations, listed below.

## NEW CASTLE COUNTY

**Newark Police Dept.**  
220 S. Main St., Newark, DE 19711  
302-366-7111

**New Castle County Police Dept.**  
3601 N. DuPont Hwy., New Castle, DE 19720  
302-573-2800

**Wilmington Police Dept.**  
300 N. Walnut St., Wilmington, DE 19801  
302-576-3670

**Walgreens**  
1120 Pulaski Hwy., Bear, DE 19701  
302-832-2300  
  
6317 Limestone Road, Hockessin, DE 19707  
302-234-5440  
  
2119 Concord Pike, Wilmington, DE 19803  
302-656-4333

## KENT COUNTY

**Dover Police Dept.**  
400 S. Queen St., Dover, DE 19904  
302-736-7111

**Smyrna Police Dept.**  
325 W. Glenwood Ave., Smyrna, DE 19977  
302-653-9217

**Felton Police Dept.**  
24 E. Sewell St., Felton, DE 19943  
302-284-8441

**Camden Police Dept.**  
1783 Friends Way, Camden, DE 19934  
302-698-9232

**Harrington Police Dept.**  
20 Mechanic St., Harrington, DE 19952  
302-398-4493

**Milford Police Dept.**  
400 NE Front St., Milford, DE 19963  
302-422-8081

**Walgreens**  
1001 Forrest Ave., Dover, DE 19904  
302-678-9820

## SUSSEX COUNTY

**Selbyville Police Dept.**  
68 W. Church St., Selbyville, DE 19975  
302-436-5085

**Greenwood Police Dept.**  
100 W. Market St., Greenwood, DE 19950  
302-349-4822

**Ocean View Police Dept.**  
201 Central Ave., Ocean View, DE 19970  
302-539-1111

**Georgetown Police Dept.**  
335 N. Race St., Georgetown, DE 19947  
302-856-6613

**Laurel Police Dept.**  
205 Mechanic St., Laurel, DE 19956  
302-875-2244

**Delmar Police Dept.**  
400 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Delmar, MD 21875  
302-846-2320

**Walgreens**  
17239 Five Points Square, Lewes, DE 19958  
302-644-7840

22898 Sussex Hwy., Seaford, DE 19973  
302-628-6100

Visit [HelpsHereDE.com/YouthProvider](https://www.helpshereDE.com/YouthProvider) for additional information on proper disposal of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.



# WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT OPIOID USE AND MISUSE







## UNDERSTAND THE RISKS OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS

There are serious risks associated with opioid pain medications. Research has shown that over-the-counter pain relievers, as well as alternative therapeutic exercises and techniques, can be as effective as opioid medications in relieving pain.

### Alternative medications for pain include:

- Non-opioid medications
- Acetaminophen
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- Serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)
- Tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs)

### Alternative therapies include:

- Physical therapy
- Exercise and strength training
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Relaxation techniques

### If your child or adolescent has been prescribed opioids:

- Give only the recommended dose.
- Give the medication only to the child or adolescent for whom it was prescribed.
- Store the opioids in a locked cabinet.
- Keep track of the medicine in the container.

### Properly dispose of unused prescription opioids:

- Keep your child safe.
- Visit [www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm](http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm) for FDA-recommended ways to safely dispose of unused medications.
- Safely dispose of unused medications, such as opioids, at a Delaware take-back location — many are located in area police departments. See a complete list on the back page of this brochure.

### 10 things a parent can do:

1. Talk early and often.
2. Support healthy activities.
3. Set clear expectations of no use.
4. Establish clear consequences.
5. Not be cool — it's not your job.
6. Not provide alcohol or drugs to your teens.
7. Pay attention.
8. Make time for your child .
9. Prioritize sleep.
10. Intervene early.

To learn more about what you can do as a parent, visit [HelpsHereDE.com/YouthProvider](http://HelpsHereDE.com/YouthProvider).

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS AN ADDICTION PROBLEM

Most children and adolescents do not become dependent if they take opioids for a short period of time. But if you do suspect that there is a problem, it's important to talk with your child about the signs you have observed.

### SIGNS OF ADDICTION

#### Physical signs:

- Altered sleep habits
- Small or pinpoint pupils
- Dramatic weight changes
- Frequent nosebleeds
- Frequent colds or illnesses
- Itchy skin, or unexplained cuts or scabs
- Leg cramps
- Poor hygiene

#### Emotional signs:

- A sense of desperation
- Changes in personality or friends
- School or work performance problems
- Out or in need of money
- Nodding off or constant sleep problems
- Paranoia
- Secrecy



- **Choose the right time to talk.** Be sure they are sober or have not been using.
- **Stick to the facts.** Threats and scare tactics don't work.
- **Voice your concern.** Begin by expressing your concerns, without making accusations (e.g., "Susan, can I ask you about your drug or alcohol use? I am concerned about you. Is there something going on we need to talk about?").
- **Be specific.** Explain what you observed and that it concerns you. For example, you found missing pills or an empty pill bottle, you've noticed a change in appearance that may indicate a problem, or their school or work performance has declined.
- **Be prepared for strong reactions.** They may accuse you of snooping or say you're crazy. Stay calm.

Visit [HelpsHereDE.com/YouthProvider](http://HelpsHereDE.com/YouthProvider) for more information and a list of treatment facilities.

In Delaware, we recommend that you talk with the health care provider who is considering prescribing an opioid medication for your child or adolescent to determine if there are alternative pain management methods that are equally effective.

### The use of prescription opioids can have side effects, even when they are taken as directed:

- Tolerance, meaning a higher dose might be necessary over time to get the same pain relief
- Physical dependence, meaning symptoms of withdrawal may occur when a medication is stopped
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression
- Itching and sweating

### Risks are greater with:

- History of drug misuse, substance use disorder, or overdose
- Mental health conditions (such as depression or anxiety)
- Sleep apnea