

## POTENTIAL DANGERS OF PRESCRIPTION PAIN MEDICATIONS

Since 2000, the number of deaths due to prescription pain medication overdose has increased more than 315%.<sup>2</sup> In Utah, more deaths were associated with prescription pain medication overdose than from car crashes.<sup>3</sup>

The most common prescription pain medications involved in these deaths are oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone, and fentanyl.<sup>4</sup>

**Prescription pain medications cause more Utah deaths than all other illicit drugs combined.<sup>5</sup>**

The proper use, storage, and disposal of prescription pain medications can do much to help reduce unintentional prescription drug overdoses. For the safety of your family, neighbors, friends, and environment, please use, store, and dispose of your prescription pain medications “only as directed.”



### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5906a1.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Utah Department of Health, Violence and Injury Prevention Program, Utah Violent Death Reporting System, 2000-2012

<sup>3</sup> [http://health.utah.gov/opa/publications/hso/07Aug\\_uninskids.pdf](http://health.utah.gov/opa/publications/hso/07Aug_uninskids.pdf). See page 3.

<sup>4</sup> Utah Department of Health, Violence and Injury Prevention Program, Prescription Opioid Deaths in Utah, 2012

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/pdf/poison-issue-brief.pdf>

## RESOURCES FOR DRUG ABUSE

Utah has many treatment resources available for overcoming dependence and addiction to prescription pain medications. To find local services or treatment, call **2-1-1** or visit **[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)**.

## WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL HELP

If you or someone you know is having difficulty breathing or may have overdosed, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** or call **9-1-1** immediately.

Naloxone (Narcan) is a drug that can reverse overdoses from heroin or prescription pain medications. There is no potential for abuse and side effects are rare; however, a person may experience abrupt withdrawal symptoms.

Signs of an overdose can include:

- Very limp body and very pale face
- Blue lips or blue fingertips
- No response when you yell his/her name or rub hard in the middle of the chest
- Slowed breathing or no breathing
- Making choking sounds or a gurgling, snoring noise

**If you are at risk for a prescription pain medication overdose or care for someone who is at risk, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about getting a prescription for naloxone.**



## PRESCRIPTION PAIN MEDICATION

**SAFE USE  
SAFE STORAGE  
SAFE DISPOSAL**



[UseOnlyAsDirected.org](http://UseOnlyAsDirected.org)

## SAFE USE

Prescription pain medications can be dangerous—even deadly—if used incorrectly. Talk with your healthcare provider and pharmacist about using them safely.



- Never take prescription pain medications that are not prescribed to you.
- Never take prescription pain medications more often or in higher doses than prescribed.
- Never drink alcoholic beverages while taking prescription pain medications.
- Never share prescription pain medications with anyone. Besides being dangerous, it's also a felony.
- Taking prescription pain medications with other depressants, such as anti-anxiety medications, sleep aids, or cold medicine, can be dangerous.
- Tell your healthcare provider about ALL medicines and supplements you take.

## SAFE STORAGE



## SAFE DISPOSAL

Clean out your medicine cabinet and take unused medications to collection bins located across the state for safe and legal disposal.



To find disposal sites, visit: **UseOnlyAsDirected.org** and click **Safe Disposal**. If you cannot find a collection site in your community, follow these steps for safe disposal:

1. Remove all personal identification from the bottles.
2. Crush and mix unused drugs with an undesirable substance such as coffee grounds, table scraps or dirt.
3. Place this mixture in a sealed container and put it in your trash can on the day of pick-up.

**The majority of people who used prescription pain medications that were not prescribed to them reported getting them from a family member or friend.<sup>1</sup>**



- Store prescription pain medications out of reach of kids and visitors.
- Know where your prescription pain medications are at all times.
- Keep prescription pain medications in the original bottle with the label attached, and with the child-resistant cap secured.
- Keep track of how many prescription pain pills are in your bottle so you are immediately aware if any are missing.
- Dispose of all unused and expired prescription pain medications properly.

