

OPIOIDS FACT SHEET

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are a group of drugs that are primarily used to relieve pain. Other medical uses include the control of coughs and diarrhea, and for the treatment of addiction to other opioids.

Opioids bind to specific sites in the brain and the body that control basic life functions like breathing, heart rate, body temperature, and consciousness. Once attached, they reduce the body's perception of pain. They can also produce euphoria, a property that contributes to their potential for unsafe use.



WHAT IS AN OVERDOSE?

An opioid overdose is a medical emergency that occurs when a person takes an amount of a drug or combination of drugs that is more than their body can process. Because opioids cause respiratory depression, taking more than the body can handle can cause breathing to slow, become irregular, or stop. As a consequence, the person can lose consciousness and eventually die.

Anyone can overdose — experienced users, new users, young or old.

COMMON OPIOIDS

Chemical name	Brand name
Fentanyl	Actiq, Duragesic, Sublimaze
Heroin	Diamorphine Hydrochloride
Hydrocodone	Vicodin
Hydromorphone	Dilaudid
Oxycodone	OxyContin, OxyNeo, Percodan, Percocet,
Morphine	Duramorph, Roxanol
Methadone	Dolophine, Methadose
Buprenorphine	Suboxone
Codeine	Tylenol 3 & 4
Pethidine	Demerol
Pentazocine	Talwin

SIGNS OF OPIOID OVERDOSE

- Can't wake the person up
- Breathing is very slow, erratic or has stopped
- Deep snoring or gurgling sounds
- Fingernails or lips are blue or purple
- Body is very limp
- Pupils are very small
- Skin feels cold and clammy

OVERDOSE RISK FACTORS

Factors that increase the risk of opioid overdose include:

- Taking prescription opioids that were not prescribed to you
- Obtaining opioids from an unregulated source where their quality and potency are not known
- Having overdosed on opioids before
- Mixing opioids with other depressants like alcohol or benzodiazepine (e.g. Valium, Xanax)
- Using opioids again after having stopped for a while, which lowers tolerance
- Using opioids alone¹

OPIOID USE IN PETERBOROUGH CITY AND COUNTY



4TH HIGHEST
rate of opioid-related
deaths in Ontario.²



3RD HIGHEST
rate of opioid-related
hospitalizations in
Ontario.³

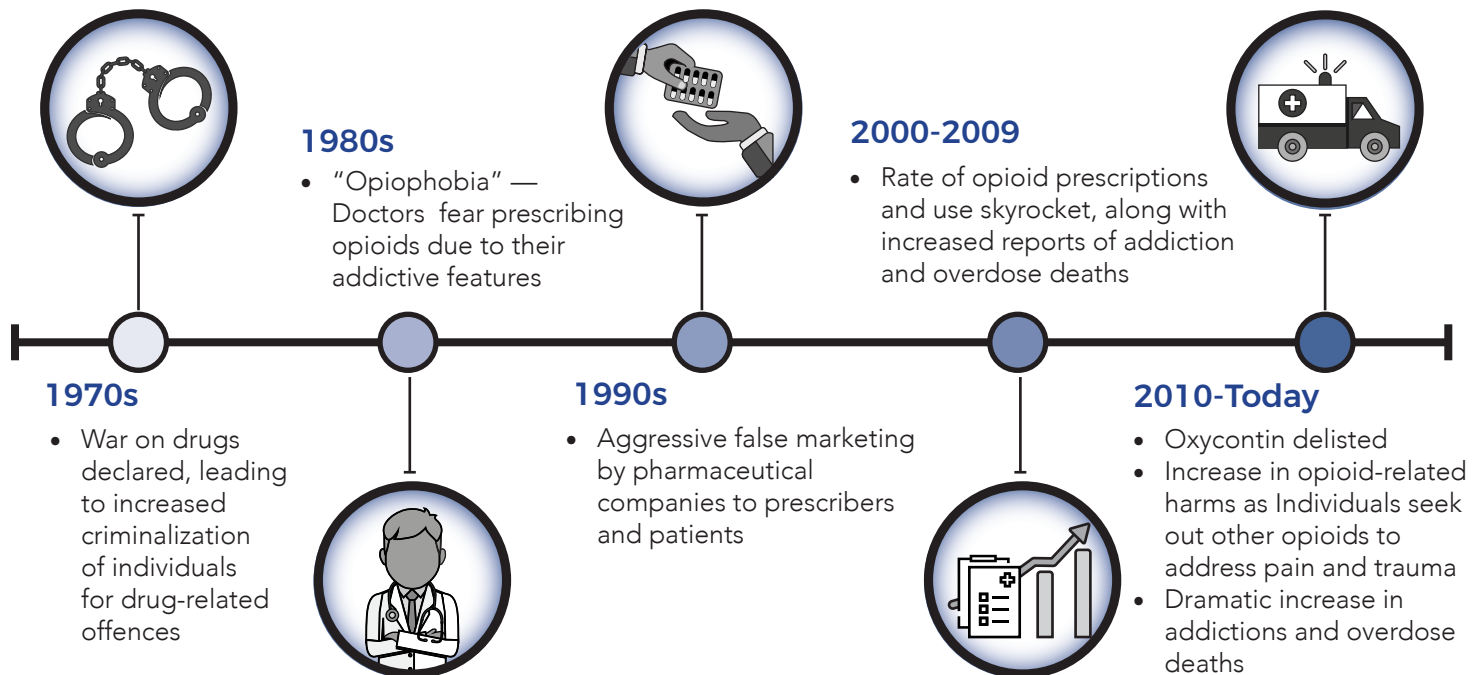


43 PERCENT
increase in emergency
department visits
between 2014 & 2016.⁴



10,956
prescription* opioid
users in 2015.⁵

THE OPIOID CRISIS: A BRIEF TIMELINE



REFERENCES

¹Government of Ontario. (2017). Get Naloxone Kits for Free. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-naloxone-kits-free>

²Ontario Drug Policy Research Network. (2017). Behind the prescriptions: A snapshot of opioid use Across All Ontarians. Retrieved from: <http://odprn.ca/research/publications/opioid-prescribing-in-ontario-august-2017/>

³Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2017). Opioid-related harms in Canada. Retrieved from: https://secure.cihi.ca/free_products/opioid-harms-chart-book-en.pdf

⁴Public Health Ontario. (2017). Opioid-related morbidity and mortality in Ontario. Retrieved from: <http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/dataandanalytics/pages/opioid.aspx>

⁵Ontario Drug Policy Research Network. (2016). Opioid use and related adverse events in Ontario. Retrieved from: <http://odprn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ODPRN-Opioid-Use-and-Related-Adverse-Events-Nov-2016.pdf>

*This accounts for opioids obtained through the Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Find more resources and information about opioids at:
www.peterboroughdrugstrategy.com

