



What You Can Do to Prevent Opioid Misuse and Abuse

If you or a loved one is currently taking prescription opioids, or if opioids are discussed or recommended as part of your treatment plan, it is important to understand your **rights, risks and responsibilities**. Here are five things you can do to prevent prescription opioid misuse and abuse.



Properly Dispose of Remaining Prescription Opioids

Many people keep leftover prescription opioids for future use. Safe disposal can help prevent misuse and is an important part of addressing the opioid epidemic.

Learn more about proper disposal with a [fact sheet](#) from AAOA, and find a [disposal location](#) near you with the AAOA disposal locator. Never give away or share your medicines with others.



Safely Store Your Prescription Opioids

Safe storage is an important part of reducing abuse and misuse of prescription opioids because misuse can start in the home. In fact, 53 percent of those who misused prescription pain relievers in 2017 said that they got the medicine from a friend or relative.

Play your part in addressing the opioid epidemic by using these AAOA [resources](#) to learn how to safely store your prescription opioids.



Learn to Recognize Opioid Overdose Symptoms

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides [resources](#) on how to recognize opioid overdose symptoms and recommends that if you are not sure, you should treat the situation like an overdose and call 911. Shatterproof, a national non-profit organization, also offers [recommendations](#) on what to do to reverse an overdose.



Raise Awareness Among Your Friends and Family

Research shows a **lack of awareness** about safe use, storage and disposal of prescription opioids. Allied Against Opioid Abuse (AAOA) and the National Consumers League (NCL) are taking on this issue directly by raising awareness about the rights, risks and responsibilities associated with prescription opioid use. Patients and their families should know how to safely and properly use, store and dispose of opioids.

You can play an important role by sharing toolkits, videos and resources with your friends and family. Consider sharing the **"Things You Need to Know About Prescription Opioids"** video, which provides consumers with important reminders for when an opioid is prescribed.



Ask Your Healthcare Provider or Pharmacist Any Questions You May Have

Do not be afraid to ask questions of your healthcare provider or pharmacist about prescription opioids. You may also discuss alternative treatments that may help alleviate pain without involving prescription opioids. If you are concerned about overprescribing, seek advice from another healthcare provider or pharmacist.

The video, **"Questions to Ask Your Provider: Pain Management and Prescription Opioids,"** includes the three questions patients should ask their healthcare provider when discussing pain management treatment.

For more information about the risks of opioids and things you can do to prevent abuse and misuse, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).



If you or someone close to you has an addiction to pain medication, talk to your healthcare professional or contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's treatment help line at **1-800-662-HELP**.