



## Oxycontin Abuse

*"I got a call that my friend had overdosed on OxyContin and was in a coma. The doctors only gave her a 50 percent chance of living. Seeing her hooked up to tubes and machines to help her breathe, I thought I'd never see her again."- Mike, 21-year-old college student.*

### What is OxyContin?

OxyContin is a medication prescribed to treat severe pain. However, it is often misused as a way to get "high." When abused, OxyContin, like other opiates and opioids, can be addictive and potentially fatal. Frequent and repeated use of the drug can cause respiratory problems, which may lead to overdose and death.

### Fast Facts

- Approximately 1.9 million persons aged 12 or older had used OxyContin non-medically at least once in their lifetime during 2002. ([National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#), SAMHSA).
- Lifetime non-medical pain reliever prevalence among young adults age 18-25 increased from 19.4% in 2001 to 22.1% in 2002.
- OxyContin and alcoholic beverages may have dangerous interactions that can result in serious injury or death.
- The number of oxycodone emergency cases increased nearly 36% in a single year, from 3,369 in January to June 1999 to 5,261 in January to June 2000 (ONDCP).
- As of November 1, 2001, medical examiner offices in 31 States reported 1,096 overdose deaths involving oxycodone, 117 of which were related to OxyContin.

### What should I do if a friend is misusing OxyContin?

- *Talk to them.* Let your friend know you are concerned in a supportive and careful way. Here are some tips: Use "I" statements, such as "I'm worried about your safety," rather than "you" statements such as

“You’re out of control.” Avoid giving overly simple solutions such as “If you just stopped, everything would be okay.”

- *Give advice in the form of options.* Help your friend see ways to get help – recommend the campus counseling center or suggest support groups you think may help your friend work through the problem. Remember, you cannot make someone get help or change his or her attitudes or behaviors but you can make a difference by sharing your concerns, providing support, and knowing where to get information.
- *Seek support.* Your friend may deny the problem; in this case you may feel the need to tell someone else. Consider speaking with your friend’s parents, a resident advisor, or counselor, or another trusted adult.

To find help or get more information, start with your student health center or counseling service on campus, or a local Mental Health Association. In addition to those services and the organizations listed below, ask friends and family for help and support. Most people who care about you will be glad to support your efforts to stop your drug abuse.

- Center for Substance Abuse Treatment: [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/facilitylocator.doc.htm](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/facilitylocator.doc.htm)
- Narcotics Anonymous: [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)
- 1-800-DRUGHELP: [www.drughelp.org](http://www.drughelp.org)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse: [www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)