






OPIOIDS ARE A GROUP OF MEDICINES FOR PAIN.


 Opioids can cause a number of unwanted side-effects that interfere with quality of life and wellbeing.


 Increasing the dose of opioids is unlikely to give better pain relief in the long-term, and is likely to cause more unwanted side-effects and other problems.

 Examples of opioid medicines are Morphine, Codeine, Dihydrocodeine, Tramadol, Oxycodone, and Tapentadol.

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS AND HOW DO THEY WORK?

- Some opioids come from plants and some are made in a laboratory. They work by attaching to parts of the nervous system.
- They can provide pain relief by blocking pain signals in the brain and spinal cord.
- We know that Opioids can help at first. We also know that over time, the body gets used to opioids and they become less effective at relieving pain.

 Buprenorphine and Fentanyl are examples of opioids that come in patches.

 Sometimes opioids are mixed with paracetamol, for example in Co-codamol and Co-dydramol.



“

I don't like the fuzzy feeling of being on opioids- I need my imagination intact for what few jobs I can do!

”

WHAT PROBLEMS CAN OPIOIDS CAUSE?



Scientists have found that people taking regular opioids long-term are more likely to fall, have problems with sex drive, be prone to infections, & have poor sleep.



People may get unpleasant symptoms if they run out of opioids, or between doses. These are called withdrawal symptoms, they are a sign of being dependent on the opioids.



The majority of people taking opioids for long-term pain do not become addicted even though they may be physically dependent on them.

Common side-effects of opioids can include...

... feeling sick, dizziness, daytime sleepiness, memory problems, constipation, itching, sweating & weight gain

Withdrawal symptoms can include...

... worse pain, tiredness, restlessness, sweating, aching muscles, diarrhoea, stomach cramps and a runny nose.



I didn't realise I was suffering opioid side effects until I stopped taking them, I had stomach problems and constipation. Now my concentration is now better, I'm not drowsy and I feel clear headed again



FIND OUT MORE

Your practice pharmacist is here to support you to.

If you do not have a plan to make a change to the opioid medicines you take, or if you are considering a change to an existing plan, then first speak to your pharmacist.

You should be able to find your practice pharmacist's contact details on Your Pain Action Plan.

To find out how other people manage their pain and for real-life experience of reducing opioids, visit [visitwww.mypainreview.co.uk](http://www.mypainreview.co.uk)

