

Opioid Fact Card

Opioids are a class of drugs that include pain relievers available legally by prescription, the illegal drug heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. Opioids act on opioid receptors in both the spinal cord and brain to reduce the intensity of pain-signal perception. Opioids also affect brain areas that control emotion, which can further diminish the effects of painful stimuli.

Prescription Opioids can be prescribed by doctors to treat moderate to severe pain, but can also have serious risks and side effects.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid pain reliever. It is many times more powerful than other opioids and is approved for treating severe pain, typically advanced cancer pain.

The illegal drug Heroin is also an opioid, however it will not be covered in great detail as opioid misuse focuses on the misuse of prescription drugs.

Prescription Opioids can be prescribed by doctors to treat moderate to severe pain, but can also have serious risks & side effects.

Some Common Prescription Opioids (generic and brand names)

- Codeine
- Diphenoxylate (Lomotil®)
- Fentanyl
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin®)
- Methadone
- Morphine (Kadian®, Avinza®)
- Oxycodone (OxyContin®, Percocet®)
- Oxycodone (Opana®)