



# OPIOIDS: What you need to know

**What is an opioid?** An opioid is a drug commonly used to treat moderate to severe pain.



Opioids are a class of drugs that include pain relievers available legally by prescription such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, and morphine; synthetic opioids such as fentanyl; and the illegal drug heroin.



## Know the Facts

- Opioids are ADDICTIVE. You can become addicted to opioids in as little as five days [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)].
- 1 in 3 prescriptions filled in Virginia are for opioids (CDC).
- In 2021, there were 189 opioid overdose ED visits in Loudoun County (Virginia Department of Health).
- Most overdoses are linked to illicitly manufactured fentanyl, especially counterfeit pills [Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)].
- Fake prescription pills are easily accessible and often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms, making them available to anyone with a smartphone, including minors (DEA).
- 60% of fake prescription pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose (DEA).



## Reduce the Risk

- Store medications safely and securely by using a medication lock box and keeping medications out of reach of kids, family, pets and guests.
- Dispose of expired or unused prescription opioids by using drug deactivation bags or medication drop boxes.
- Talk with your doctor about nonopioid pain management options when prescribed painkillers.
- Only take opioids prescribed to you and take as directed. Never share your prescription opioids.
- Talk with your loved ones if you are concerned about opioid misuse or addiction. Express care and concern and be patient and open when listening.

Visit [knowrx.org](https://www.knowrx.org) to get a free locking container, find a local drop box, and connect to resources.



## Learn to respond to an opioid overdose

Take a free REVIVE! course to learn the signs of opioid overdose and how to respond to an opioid overdose emergency with the administration of naloxone nasal spray. Receive free naloxone when you complete the training. Visit [loudoun.gov/revive](https://loudoun.gov/revive) for details.



To discuss substance abuse treatment, resources, and options, contact the Loudoun County Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Services at 703-771-5155.



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Mental Health,  
Substance Abuse and  
Developmental Services