

## WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are powerful, highly addictive narcotic substances that mimic chemicals in your brain and body. Commonly prescribed to treat pain, they trick the brain into feeling pleasure and can cause drowsiness, confusion, nausea and slow the respiratory system.



## HELP STOP THE EPIDEMIC

Taking just a few simple steps can help fight the opioid epidemic here in South Carolina.

For example, if you have an illness or condition, have had surgery or an injury, understand that there may be some pain. Then, follow your doctor's orders about taking medication. But don't be afraid to ask questions or voice concerns about prescriptions – be your own advocate.

Always store medications carefully and get rid of unused drugs. You can also protect your identity by removing the label before throwing away prescription containers. You just might save someone's life – even one you know and love.

## PAIN KILLERS CAN BE JUST PLAIN KILLERS

Join the fight against the opioid epidemic in South Carolina.

## GET MORE INFORMATION

There is plenty of additional information out there about opioids. Do your own research and become more informed. To learn how to talk to your loved ones, or where to get help and find treatment in South Carolina, visit [justplainkillers.com](http://justplainkillers.com).

f | @ | @PlainKillersSC

AN INITIATIVE OF  
South Carolina  
**DAODAS**  
Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services

Funded through grant #1H79TI080221-01 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

**JUST PLAIN KILLERS**.COM

**1 IN 4 PEOPLE WHO ARE  
PRESCRIBED OPIOIDS STRUGGLE  
WITH ADDICTION.**

**4 IN 5 HEROIN USERS  
STARTED WITH PRESCRIPTION  
PAIN KILLERS.**

**1 IN 4 TEENS HAS MISUSED OR  
ABUSED A PRESCRIPTION DRUG  
AT LEAST ONCE.**

## A NATIONAL AND STATEWIDE ISSUE

The opioid epidemic continues to make national headlines, and South Carolina is not immune to the consequences of this menace. In our state alone, nearly five million pain killer prescriptions are filled every year. That's more than one prescription for every person in the state.

**5 MILLION  
OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS  
EACH YEAR IN S.C.**



## ADDICTION IS A DISEASE

Addiction to opioids, also known as opioid use disorder, is a chronic disease characterized by drug use that is compulsive or difficult to control, despite harmful consequences. They change the brain, making it difficult to quit.

## FINDING HELP, TREATMENT

Overcoming an opioid use disorder is a complex process that can range from intensive behavioral changes and specific treatment, to engagement in community-based support. South Carolina has local treatment providers throughout the state. Find one near you at [justplainkillers.com/find-help](http://justplainkillers.com/find-help)

## REVERSING AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

Naloxone is a medication that can be used to treat and reverse an opioid overdose. In South Carolina, this life-saving drug is available at pharmacies without a prescription. It's a good idea to have naloxone available for people who use high doses of opioids in case of an overdose.

## Tips for Safe Storage

Part of what makes pain killers so dangerous is their prevalence and availability.



### LOCK THEM UP

Secure prescription medicines in a safe place only you know about, preferably locked up.

### KEEP TRACK OF QUANTITIES

Know how much of your prescription remains so you know if any have been taken by someone else.

### NO LOOSE PILLS

Only keep opioids in the bottle provided by your pharmacy.

### REMOVE THEM FROM YOUR HOME

Take your unused prescriptions to a local drug disposal site.

### ALWAYS SECURE AFTER USE

After taking your prescribed dose, immediately return the bottle to its safe place.

Find the drug disposal sites nearest you:  
[justplainkillers.com/take-action/](http://justplainkillers.com/take-action/)