



Opioid Medications



Overview

Opioids are a class of powerful drugs. They can control severe pain. Oxycodone, hydrocodone, and codeine are examples of prescription opioids. So are morphine and fentanyl.

How They Work

Opioids can be injected into your bloodstream. Or, they can be taken in pill form. Once in your body, opioids mimic chemicals that your body makes naturally. They attach to special places called "opioid receptors" on nerve cells in your brain and spinal cord. They help block pain signals. They can slow your breathing. Opioids also have an affect on the part of your brain that controls emotions. They flood your brain with good feelings. They can make you feel relaxed and content.

Side Effects and Dangers

Opioids do have side effects such as sleepiness, dizziness, nausea and constipation. And because opioids can have such a powerful affect on your mind and body, they can be addictive. With long-term use, your body can begin to depend on them. This can be dangerous.

Safe Use

Opioids can be helpful for many types of pain, but you must use them responsibly to avoid problems. It's important to follow your doctor's advice for safe use.

