

## Signs of Opioid Abuse



### Overview

Lately, something just doesn't seem right. You think your loved one could be abusing opioids. But how can you tell? Keep an eye out for these subtle signs of opioid abuse.

### Physical signs

First, watch for physical signs. A person who is under the influence of opioids may be drowsy a lot. Their sleep patterns may change. Their breathing may slow down. They may complain of constipation. And, their pupils may be very tiny, even when the light is at a normal level.

### Emotional changes

Watch for emotional signs, too. Opioid use can cause feelings of euphoria. It can also cause rapid mood swings. The person can be elated one minute, and angry the next. And, they may make poor decisions.

### Monitor their medication use

If your loved one has been prescribed opioids, watch how they use their medication. Do they use it exactly as prescribed? Do they take more than they need? Do they take it even when they aren't in pain? Have they ever claimed to have "lost" their pills, and need a new prescription? Have they ever "borrowed" pills from another person? These are all red flags.

### Be honest

And finally, if your loved one is abusing opioids, your own behavior may change, too. Do you feel anxious and worried about your loved one? Do you make excuses for them? Have you withdrawn from your family or friends because of the way they act? Be honest with yourself. Don't look the other way.

### Conclusion

If you recognize these warning signs, speak up. Talk to your loved one. Talk to their doctor. By confronting the problem, you may help save a life.