

<http://www.nar-anon.org/>

## **Patient resources**

If you suffer from moderate to severe pain, you might be prescribed an opioid painkiller such as OxyContin or Percocet. Here are some things you need to know:

- **Some doctors recommend** discussing alternative methods of controlling pain, such as acupuncture.
- **If you decide** to take an opioid painkiller, ask your physician exactly what the drug is, how it works, the right dosage and the risks and signs of dependency.
- **For acute pain**, try methods such as non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen or nerve blocks.
- **You might have a problem** if you begin taking more than the prescribed dosage or ask for an increase in dosage because you find the medicine is “not effective” in controlling pain.
- **Other warning signs** include inability to control amounts you take, craving more, feeling you can’t go without it or if your focus on a given day is the need to get pain medication – even illegally.
- **Patients with chronic pain** should get medicine from a pain specialist who is board certified.
- **Cancer and end-of-life pain management** are the only areas in which use of opioid painkillers is universally accepted.
- **If you have leftover opioids**, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends turning them in for disposal to prevent abuse and keeping the drugs out of landfills and water.
- **Ohio sites:** The Ohio Attorney General’s Office has a network of prescription drug drop boxes. Call 855-224-6446 or go to [www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov).

- **Northern Kentucky sites:** The Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force has drop-off boxes in several places across Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties. Call 859-525-6272 or go to [www.nkdsf.org/](http://www.nkdsf.org/).

## **Family resources**

For parents or loved ones of a heroin addict or suspected addict, there are certain things you can do to recognize symptoms or to get help for the whole family:

- **Trust your intuition** and act immediately. Encourage the user to get help.
- **Educate yourself on the drug** and watch for warning signs of heroin use: contracted pupils, no response of pupils to light, needle marks, sleeping at unusual times, sweating, vomiting, coughing, sniffing, twitching, loss of appetite.
- **Talk to the user about your concerns**, and offer help and support without being judgmental. Be prepared for denial or an angry response.
- **Organizations such as Nar-Anon** or Al-Anon Family Groups provide support for those affected by someone else's addiction. A list of meetings can be found at [www.nar-anon.org](http://www.nar-anon.org) or [www.cincinnatiatfg.org](http://www.cincinnatiatfg.org)
- **Talk to a counselor** about getting treatment for the heroin abuser. Seek support for yourself, such as traditional counseling, support groups or blogging communities.
- **Don't blame yourself.** Addiction is an illness and won't get better without treatment. You can't force an addict to get help or change behavior.
- **Do not pay the user's bills**, do things for them they could do themselves, or make excuses to shield them from the consequences of their behavior.
- **Lock up valuables**, cash and medicine.

- **To get help for someone** with an addiction, call the Alcoholism Council of the Greater Cincinnati Area at 513-281-7880. Services are not limited to solely alcohol problems.

- **For a list of treatment facilities**, go to [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

## **Treatment resources**

People seeking treatment for a drug addiction, especially those without private insurance, face a significant wait in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

- **Access to treatment** – inpatient, outpatient, maintenance programs using medication and behavioral counseling – is better for people with private insurance through their employers. If you have insurance, contact your doctor or the resources above, the alcoholism council or [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

- **For those without insurance**, the wait in Northern Kentucky, where Transitions Inc. is the largest center and other resources are limited, is up to six months.  
Transitions: 859-491-2090

- **The waits in Hamilton County** can last months, as well. The Center for Chemical Addictions Treatment in Cincinnati's West End – 513-381-6672 – can get people into its residential treatment program within 18 to 20 days. The wait for men at Prospect House in East Price Hill – 513-921-1613 – is one to three months.

- **Women who need residential services** can get into First Step Home, Walnut Hills – 513-961-4663 – frequently on the day they call for service.

- **Treatment workers hope** that when the Affordable Care Act takes effect in 2014, access will improve.