

OPIOID WITHDRAWAL

Opioids are strong medicines used to treat severe pain. They include both natural drugs like morphine, made from opium poppy, and synthetic medicine like oxycodone which are made in a lab but work in similar way. The term **narcotic** is often used to refer to both types.

Opioids change the way the brain feels pain and pleasure. They attach to special parts of the brain called mu-opioid receptors. This makes the brain release a chemical called dopamine, which helps block pain and makes people feel good.

What is Opioid Withdrawal?

Opioid withdrawal happens when a person who has been using opioids regularly suddenly stops or uses less. This can lead to a difficult and sometimes painful process called withdrawal.

Opioid withdrawal can be intense and upsetting. The symptoms can be mild or severe, depending on how long the person has been using opioids, how much they were using, and what type of opioid it was.

It is important to understand withdrawal symptoms and how to support a person experiencing withdrawal.

Signs of Opioid Withdrawal

Some **Early** Signs:

- Cold like symptoms
- Runny nose or watery eyes
- Restlessness, Irritability
- Sweating
- Yawning
- Trouble sleeping

Some **Late** Signs:

- Stomach cramps. Nausea or vomiting or Diarrhea
- Dilated pupils. Fast heart rate. Higher Blood Pressure
- Strong cravings and worsening anxiety
- Goosebumps
- Muscle and bone pain
- Low mood

What should you do?

- Recognize symptoms of withdrawal
- Stay calm and supportive
- Offer fluids, snacks, and comfort items
- Call medical provider to let them know
- Follow Protocol
- Monitor symptoms regularly-write down any changes

Call 911 or go to the emergency room if the person:

- Can't keep food or water down (Vomiting or Diarrhea)
- Chest pain or difficulty breathing
- A high fever or confusion
- Talks about hurting themselves or others
- Seizures
- Become unresponsive or very hard to wake

