**Opioid Abuse**

* Of the 63,632 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2016, 42,249, or 66 percent, involved opioids. [NIH](https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates)
* The CDC has declared prescription drug abuse a public health epidemic. Every day, 115 people in the United States die from a opioid overdose, 46 of which are related to prescription painkillers.
* According to the United States Surgeon General, opioid overdose deaths nearly quadrupled from 1999 to 2016, and opioid prescriptions have increased markedly – almost enough for every adult in America to have a bottle of pills.
* About 11.5 million Americans age 12 and older misused prescription pain medicine in 2016, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. About 2.1 million people misused prescription opioids for the first time during that year.
* In 2016, about 2.5 million young adults aged 18 to 25 and 891,000 adolescents aged 12 to 17 had misused opioids during the previous year, according to the [2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FFR1-2016/NSDUH-FFR1-2016.pdf) (NSDUH).
* 86 percent of young drug users in a study from 2008 to 2009 had used opioid pain relievers non-medically prior to using heroin. The access to these opioid pain relievers consisted of three main sources of opioids: family, friends or personal prescriptions.
* 53 percent of prescription painkillers misused are either given by, bought from or taken from a friend or relative, according to the NSDUH.
* In a 2015 study reported in *Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, researchers found that more than 75 percent of high school heroin users began experimenting with opioids after initially being introduced to prescription painkillers.
* The [New Jersey Office of the Attorney General](https://www.njcares.gov/) reported that nearly 4.9 million prescriptions for opioid painkillers were dispensed in the state in 2017.
* Dentists prescribe [more opioids to teens than any other healthcare provide](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3187622/)r. Dentists wrote more than [6.4% of all prescriptions](https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177(18)30009-6/pdf) written in the United States in 2012.
* A [2016 University of Pennsylvania study](https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2016/september/100-million-prescription-opioi) found that each year more 100 million prescription opioid pills had gone unused following wisdom teeth removal.
* 26.6 percent of all prescriptions written by dentists, 22.7 percent written by emergency medicine physicians and 41.8 percent written by orthopedists, were for opioids.
* Male adolescent athletes who participated in competitive sports across a three-year study period had two times greater odds of being prescribed painkillers during the past year and had four times greater odds of medically misusing painkillers (i.e., using them to get high and using them too much) compared to males who did not participate in competitive sports.
* Legitimate opioid use before high school graduation is independently associated with a [33 percent increase in the risk](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/10/21/peds.2015-1364) of future opioid misuse after high school.
* According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), women are more likely to have chronic pain, be prescribed prescription pain relievers, be given higher doses, and use them for longer time periods than men. Women may become dependent on prescription pain relievers more quickly than men.
* According to the NSDUH, 948,000 Americans reported using heroin in the past year. The number of people who are using heroin for the first time nearly doubled from 90,000 people in 2006 to 170,000 in 2016.
* A 2016 Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey (PDFNJ) study, found that nearly one in three parents of New Jersey middle school students do not believe there is a link between pain killers prescribed for things like sports injuries and wisdom tooth removal and the rising use of heroin in New Jersey. The study also found that less than 50 percent of parents of New Jersey Middle School students feel they are knowledgeable about heroin.
* 91 percent of New Jersey residents agree that physicians should be legally required to discuss the risk of developing either a physical or psychological dependency on the prescription pain medication with patients prior to prescribing it and two-thirds believe that physicians discussing the potential of dependencies with patients will help reduce the number of individuals who ultimately become addicted to the pain medications.
* The [Council of Economic Advisers](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/The%20Underestimated%20Cost%20of%20the%20Opioid%20Crisis.pdf) estimated the economic cost of the opioid epidemic totaled $504 billion in 2015.

