What Happens To Your Body When You Use Prescription Pain Medications (Opioids)?

By The Professionals At Robert Alexander Center

Opioids can be highly effective solutions in managing mild to severe pain and they can also be prescribed as a medication for cough and diarrhea-related issues.

However, opioids have a "relaxing" and "calming" effect on the brain too and this can sometimes mean that they are used for non-medical reasons, and this is a problem. If you or someone you love or care about is experiencing issues with Opioid-related abuse, we can help. Read on.

What Are "Opioids" And What Are Their Effects?

Opioids are drugs that contain an active ingredient that is harvested from the poppy plant. Opioids are a broad group of pain-relieving drugs and they work by activating opioid receptors in your brain.

They contain chemicals that have a relaxing impact on the body, dulling pain and in some cases slowing overall body response. This can have the desired effect on the body when it comes to pain management, but unfortunately, they don't just numb physical pain, but when they're abused – they can seem to numb emotional pain too. Making them highly addictive to people who have suffered trauma in their lives. They seem to relieve this pain – but they only seem to do so. When the "high" is over, the issues that caused their misuse in the first place remain and the cycle of addiction begins.

However, perfectly "normal" people can also get addicted to opioid use because the drug has a physical addictive quality, which makes the brain and body physically "crave" and want more.

What Are The Physical Effects Of Abuse?

Although opioids can be used responsibly, in teens this issue becomes difficult. The teenage brain develops its "pleasure" centers faster than it does the teen's decision-making and risk analysis functions. This means that teenagers who have existing trauma or histories of abuse and neglect, or who are suffering from teenage depression can find the drug an "easy way out". Teenagers who have experienced physical trauma on the sports field or in a car accident, for example, could also be drawn to the abusive impacts of this drug.

Some of the possible effects of the drug on the body include:

- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Constipation
- Euphoria
- Slowed breathing

You can often find competitive athletes, dancers, football players or other high-performance related sports teens drawn to the drug for its pain relief qualities, making them more competitive.

Ok, But Why Is This "Bad" If It Makes You Feel Better?

Opioids can make it seem as if you're feeling better. Especially if you've been the victim of abuse or experienced other forms of household trauma or depression and anxiety – but it's not true. It only makes you *feel* as if you're better. As soon as the effects of the drug have worn off, you'll need to take increasing amounts to feel the same impact as the original "high" and as the drug has a physically addictive quality, you won't be able to "think" your way out of it. Suddenly stopping the use of Opioids after prolonged use will result in a period of withdrawal.

What Are The Withdrawal Symptoms And What Is The Treatment For Opioid Addiction?

Withdrawal symptoms can vary from person to person as well as the intensity that each person experiences. Some of the most common symptoms are:

Early symptoms of withdrawal could be:

- Agitation
- Anxiety
- Muscle aches
- Increased tearing
- Insomnia
- Runny nose
- Sweating
- Yawning

Late symptoms of withdrawal could be:

- Abdominal cramping
- Diarrhea
- Dilated pupils
- Goosebumps
- Nausea
- Vomiting

It is very important to find the right treatment as prolonged use eventually destroys the life of the addict and continued opioid abuse almost always turns into heroin addiction.

There are various forms of treatment available and you must find the right one for you. Almost all of them will involve a period of detoxification, which is a period where the patient is put through a process of cleansing their system of the drug. The intensity of this will be down to how long the user has been using the drug and at what level.

But What If I'm Afraid Of Going To Rehab?

We understand that this can be a scary and difficult time for you, but what's even scarier is knowing that your future isn't going to look any better while you're using it. It's a horrible reality of our modern-day society, but going to rehab is becoming as normal as going to see your general practitioner. You shouldn't be afraid of going if that's what you need. But there are other types of treatment including intensive outpatient treatment which means you won't be housed in the center but you'll have to visit at predetermined points for therapy, treatment and counseling.

There is also a less intensive form of outpatient treatment and which one is right for you will be determined when you first reach out to get some help.

We know that this time is probably very confusing and difficult for you but as cliché as it sounds, you're not alone and many other young people are experiencing what you're going through.

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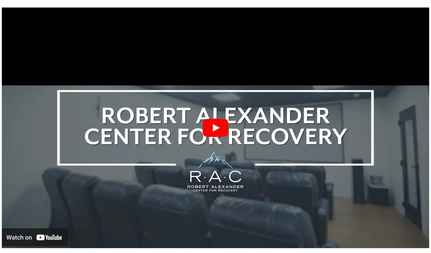
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