

Do Opioids Cause Long-Term Damages to Your Brain?

by Robert Alexander Center | Apr 15, 2022 | Blog | 0 comments



People who have been prescribed opioids for conditions like extreme pain could be at a higher risk of addiction. [Addiction](#) to opioids has increased over the last two decades, but despite their benefits in some areas of medicine, opioids provide a double-edged sword, especially when it comes to the treatment of pain. Opioid brain damage is one of the most common effects. People who have never overdosed or survived toxic doses of opioids can experience long-term effects on their brains.

The Impacts of Brain Damage From an Overdose

The most serious and permanent damage to the brain is when an overdose occurs. Because opioids slow breathing down, someone may breathe so slowly they don't get enough oxygen to their brain. Depending on the area deprived of oxygen, someone may experience a wide range of symptoms including:

- Problems moving or walking.
- Vision and hearing loss.
- Memory loss.
- Loss of coordination or balance.
- Issues reading and writing.
- Irritability and confusion.

Other Brain Problems Caused by Opioids

There are also other conditions that can affect specific parts of the brain, including the following:

Hyperalgesia

This is defined as increased sensitivity to pain. In healthy people, normal stimulation like a pinprick is not very painful. Opioids can make the brain more sensitive to pain, so people can perceive the slightest touch as extremely painful. As many people take opioids for pain, those who are [experiencing addiction](#) can develop these issues over time.

Problems With Impulse Control

Prolonged use of opioids can disrupt the brain circuits involved with impulse control. This makes it more difficult to resist temptation, which can spiral into [addictive behavior](#).

Damage to the Frontal Lobe

The frontal lobe plays a crucial role in memory and a number of functions. Addiction to opioids can create prolonged impairment in the front brain regions, resulting in problems with memory, spatial awareness, and attention, and can occur for a number of years after the final use of opioids.

A Disrupted Reward System

The reward system can be disrupted through the use of opioids. Neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin can be increased through using opioids, so when opioids are not being used, people can experience difficulty getting pleasure from what would normally bring them joy. Therefore, anybody who is experiencing an addiction to opioids can feel symptoms of depression which will further intensify the addiction.

Opioid addiction can cause long-term damage to an adult's brain, which is why it's so important that we provide an [approach to treatment](#) that can address the root causes but also help an individual to understand how prolonged use of opioids can increase the risk of long-term side effects in an adult's brain. Addiction is a subject that can have a wide-ranging impact on someone's life, but opioid addiction is a disease that can be treated. It's important to remember that any prolonged use can have a major effect on an adult's brain in some of the above ways. Therefore having treatments is one of the most beneficial ways to help anybody with an addiction to opioids.

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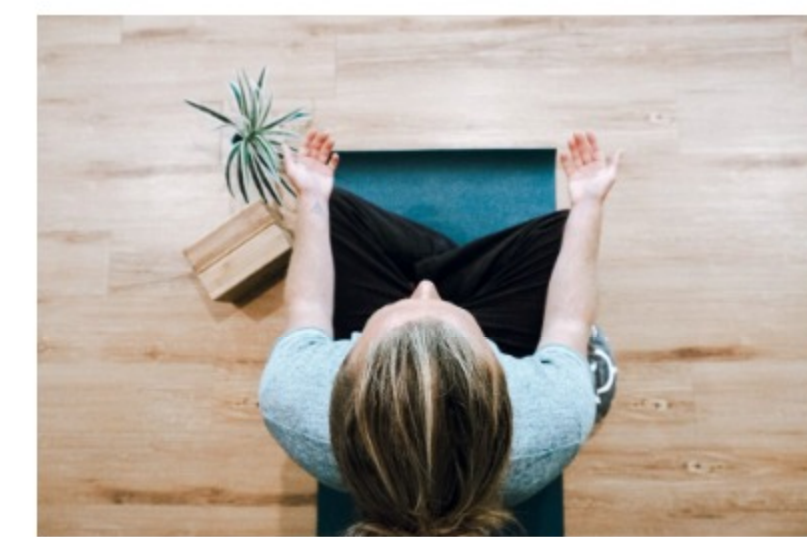

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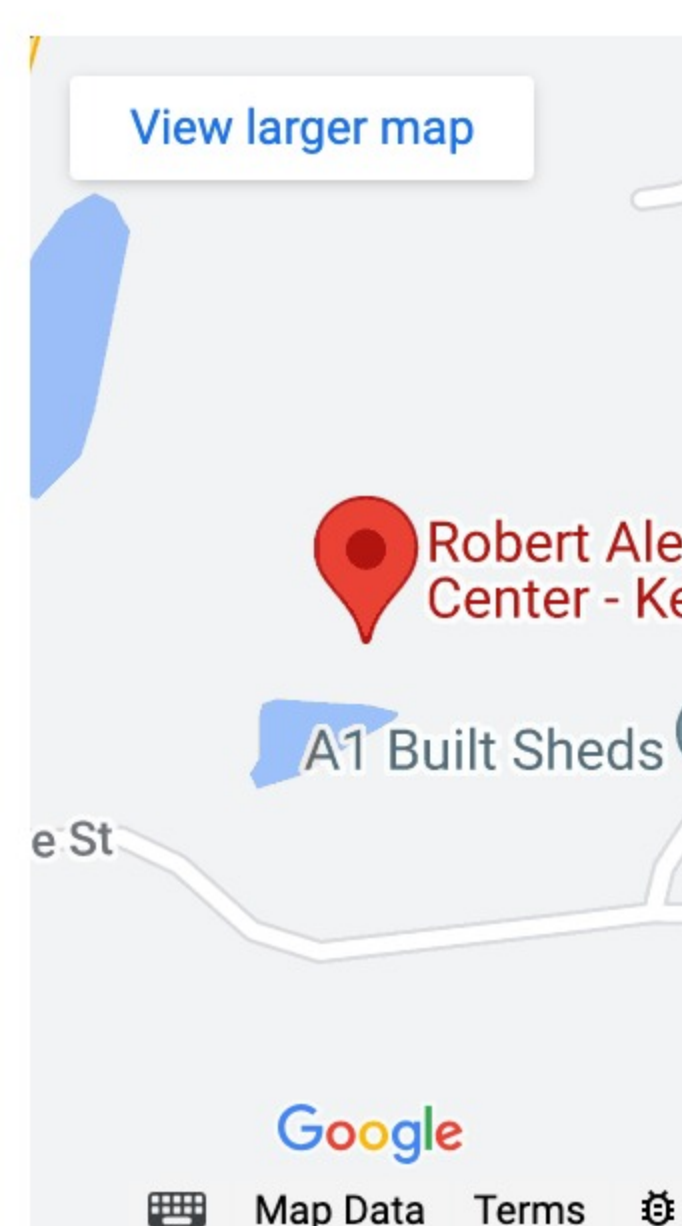
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