

# What Are the Long Term Effects of an Opioid Addiction?

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Tragically, 128 people lose their lives to [opioid addiction](#) every day in the US, meaning that the havoc such addiction wreaked on sufferers and their families, is clear. It is also well known that opioid addiction ruins the personal and professional lives of those suffering from it, impacting their ability to function and pursue meaningful activities. Below you'll find the long-term effects of opioid addiction.

What many don't understand is that not only do these drugs affect the brain in a way that further encourages powerful urges to take opioids, but there are many other lasting effects to taking drugs such as Codeine, Fentanyl, Heroin, Methadone, Morphine, and Tramadol too.

Indeed, opioid addiction can also cause long-term, serious side effects. This means getting the right [addiction treatment](#) as soon as possible is vital.



## Hormonal effects

Few people realize that opioid addiction can cause serious issues with hormones over the long term. Indeed, few people understand that our hormones (the endocrine system) are vital to our body's function. Indeed, when people suffer from endocrine issues a whole range of additional issues can present that range from mental health difficulties such as depression and anxiety to physical problems like infertility.

In particular, the long-term effects of opioid addiction on the endocrine system include a reduction in libido in both men and women, as well as infertility in both sexes. Erectile dysfunction is also common in men after opioid addiction. All of which can have a serious impact on sufferers' quality of life.

Psychological issues associated with changes in the endocrine system and opioid use include fatigue and depression. In some cases, those with endocrine disruption caused by opioid use will require hormone replacement therapy.

## Osteoporosis

Other long-term effects of opioid use include issues with bone density and osteoporosis. Indeed, long-term users are at risk of developing the slow-developing condition of osteoporosis which weakens bones and makes them more likely to break.

## Lowers the immune system

Another long-term effect of opioid addiction is that it can have a very negative impact on our body's ability to defend and heal itself. This is because some opioids change the way our immune system works, a process known as the immunomodulating effect.

Indeed, side effects of opioid use include changes to the way that our bodies spot and attack tumors, something that could have a very harmful long-term effect. Additionally, opioids have been shown to change the way our bodies deal with microbes which means a long-lasting effect of addiction may include greater susceptibility to infection.

As our body's ability to spot and deal with tumors and defend itself from unwanted microbial visitors is essential to our health and well-being, taking action to prevent these side effects now is vital. However, coming off of opioids can be a challenging and painful process that is not easy if you have been using them for a long period. Fortunately, [outpatient treatment centers](#) can help you [detox](#), and remove all the opioids from your system in the safest way possible.

## Increased pain sensitivity

Ironically, many people begin to take opioids to deal with physical pain, but addiction can have the opposite effect. Yes, that's right. One of the most problematic lasting effects of opioid addiction is increased pain sensitivity otherwise known as opioid-induced hyperalgesia.

Indeed, in both human and animal studies increased pain sensitivity due to the use of opioids has been noted. However, scientists currently do not have a number of the people who are affected by this condition.

Additionally, increased pain sensitivity due to opioid use is not caused by what many people assume – a resistance to the drug. Instead, another mechanism seems to be at play here.

Management of the condition is centered on reducing opioid use, although this can be very challenging for someone struggling with an addiction. The good news is there are [intensive outpatient](#) treatments available that allow sufferers to continue with their daily lives, while also getting the support and treatment they need to wean off of opioids for good.

## Quit your opioid addiction, now!

As you can see from the information above, there are many lasting negative health effects of opioid addiction. Indeed, you are not only numbing the pain you are experiencing now by misusing opioids but lining up further problems for your future self. This reality only underlines how important it is to get your opioid addiction under control as soon as possible.

Fortunately, by reaching out for intensive outpatient care you can get the support you need to beat your opioid addiction and ensure a healthier and happier future.

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