

OPIOID SAFETY AND STUDENT ATHLETES

Prescription opioids can be addictive.

While playing a sport has many benefits, it can also lead to injury. Prescription opioids, such as Vicodin, OxyContin, or Percocet, are commonly prescribed for sports-related injuries. Student athletes can be especially vulnerable to prescription opioid misuse for a variety of reasons such as pain relief, eagerness to return to the sport, and a belief that prescription opioids are “safe” because they are prescribed by a doctor. Sports culture that encourages athletes to sacrifice for “the game” may lead athletes to try to push through pain and play when injured. Getting back on the field or court after an injury shouldn’t be the athlete’s top priority.



Did You Know?

Research shows that 500mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol) and 200mg of ibuprofen taken together up to 4 times per day is most effective for treating severe pain for most people.

1

Ask questions...

- “What are the side effects of this medication?”
- “Do they have to finish taking all of these pills?”
- “When can they switch to acetaminophen and ibuprofen?”

2

Take action...

- Traumatic events and depression are connected to addiction. Work with your child’s coach to keep athletes upbeat as they heal.
- Count the number of pain pills in your home and keep them secured.
- Dispose of unused or expired medications at a local drop box. To find a location near you, visit obnidd.ok.gov. Ask friends and family members to do the same.

3

Be on the lookout for...

- Red, watery eyes; large or small pupils
- Runny nose or hacking cough
- Cold, sweaty palms; shaky hands
- Poor physical coordination
- Puffy face or paleness
- Changes in mood, grades, weight
- Lack of energy

If you notice these signs, talk to your child’s healthcare provider right away.

Learn more: oklahoma.gov/health/overdose • 405.426.8440

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