

# LET'S BE CLEAR: About opioids

It's good to be clear about substance use. About safety, support and getting help. Knowing the dangers of opioid misuse, especially for teens and young adults, can prevent opioid use disorder, overdose and even death. Opioids are highly addictive narcotics commonly prescribed for severe pain. And even though they provide relief for those struggling, they must be used with extreme caution. Opioids are a major contributor to fatal overdoses in South Dakota. Remember: If they're not prescribed to you by your doctor, they're not safe.

## Facts

- A majority of misused prescription opioids come from the homes of family and friends.
- 1 in 4 people who are prescribed opioids struggle with misuse.
- Chronic pain affects nearly 1 in 5 adults in the US.
- Opioids account for 47.3% of drug related deaths in South Dakota.\*

*\*South Dakota State Epidemiological Outcomes Behavioral Health Indicators 2024 Executive Summary*

## The Risks of Opioid Misuse

- Substance Use Disorder
- Long-term health problems
- Paralysis
- Coma
- Death
- Overdose

## Naloxone Saves Lives

Naloxone is the easiest way to reverse an opioid overdose. Anyone can use naloxone without any medical training. If you or someone you know is at risk for opioid overdose, you should always carry naloxone and keep it at home.



To find a naloxone pharmacy near you, visit:  
[LetsBeClearSD.com/prevention/find-pharmacy](https://letsbeclearsd.com/prevention/find-pharmacy).

## What to Do If You Think Someone is Overdosing

It can be hard to tell whether a person is overdosing or not. If you aren't sure, always treat it like an overdose — you could save a life.

1. Call 911 Immediately\*
2. Follow Dispatch Instructions
3. Administer Naloxone
4. Try to Keep the Person Awake and Breathing
5. Lay the Person on Their Side to Prevent Choking
6. Stay with the Person Until Emergency Assistance Arrives

*\*South Dakota law protects a person who is overdosing or the person who called for help from legal trouble.*

## Fentanyl

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths. Even the smallest dose can be deadly. As little as two milligrams, or the size of 5 grains of salt, can cause overdose.

## Lock Boxes

Both prescription and over the counter drugs can be harmful if taken in the wrong way or by the wrong person. Storing medications safely at home can help keep everyone safe. Medication lock boxes make sure medicine is only accessible to the right people and help reduce accidental overdose or medication misuse. Sign up for a free lock box at [LetsBeClearSD.com/prevention/safe-disposal](https://letsbeclearsd.com/prevention/safe-disposal).



## Let's Be Clear

The words we use matter. And by saying "substance use disorder" instead of "addiction," you're emphasizing that it's a chronic — and treatable — disease. Help reduce stigma and make it easier for people to seek treatment by talking openly with your family. Find help for substance use disorders at [LetsBeClearSD.com](https://letsbeclearsd.com)



Content was developed in partnership with the South Dakota Departments of Health and Social Services.