

# SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY

## Opioid Crisis: Impact of COVID-19

The pandemic's impact on the opioid crisis has led to more than 81,000 drug overdose deaths (1). COVID-19 has caused more people to develop depression and anxiety. It has also led to limited social and family gatherings. These are some of the reasons why the risk for turning to substance use has significantly increased (3). Knowing about the dangers of opioid misuse and how to recognize an overdose might help save someone in your life.

### Dangers of Opioid Misuse

The use of opioids can have negative effects on both the body and the brain. Side effects can include: drowsiness, confusion, nausea, constipation, euphoria, and slowed breathing (2). These side effects can lead to more serious outcomes such as hypoxia and overdose. Hypoxia is when too little oxygen reaches the brain, leading to short- and long-term consequences such as coma, permanent brain damage or death (2).

### Recognize an Overdose

- Small, constricted "pinpoint pupils"
- Falling asleep or loss of consciousness
- Slow/shallow breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Pale, blue, or cold skin
- If unsure, treat the situation like an overdose to save a life. Call 911 or seek medical care
- Do not leave person alone
- If you have access to Narcan, please administer
- For more information & free Narcan, please visit the [Genesee Community Health Center](#)

### How You Can Help Prevent Opioid Misuse

- Talk to your doctor about ways to manage pain that do not involve prescription opioids
- Use and store opioids properly
  - Never take more than prescribed
  - Avoid taking opioids with alcohol or other substances or medications
  - Do not share or sell prescription opioids
  - Store in secure place out of reach of others
  - If you have unused prescription opioids, use a community drug take-back program
- To find a drug take-back location near you, [click here](#)

### If You Need Help

If you or someone you know needs help or resources, call Crisis Services at (810) 257-3740 or toll free at (877) 346-3648 where someone is always available 24 hours a day. For non-emergency services, call (810) 257-3742. TTY users call (810) 232-6310. Visit [www.genhs.org](http://www.genhs.org) for more information.



1. 2020. Overdose Deaths Accelerating During COVID-19  
2. 2020. Prescription Opioids Drug Facts  
3. 2021. A crisis on top of a crisis: COVID-19 and the opioid epidemic