



**SAFETY: it takes all of us**

## PREVENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE CHECKLIST

### Remember

In addition to the risk of overdose, over-the-counter, prescription medications and illicit drugs can affect a person's ability to safely drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery. Identify the risks and promote the prevention and treatment of prescription overdose to keep your employees and workplace safe.

Overdoses of prescription medicine are on the rise. Most fatal unintentional overdoses result from pain relief medications also known as opioid analgesics. Opioids include: oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone and fentanyl.

### You can do your part to prevent unintentional drug overdoses:

- Use medications only as directed by your physician
- Only use the recommended dosage prescribed by your physician
- Keep medications in their original containers
- Don't share prescribed medications
- Properly dispose of any unused or expired medications
- Talk with your physician or pharmacist for possible drug interactions
- Store medications up and away from children and pets
- Never mix opioids with alcohol or benzodiazepines (medication that helps relieve anxiety)
- Keep a record of the medications and supplements you are currently taking, including over-the-counter
- If you suspect a co-worker is struggling with prescription drug abuse, discuss the concern with Human Resources or your Employee Assistance Program
- Seek treatment if you believe you have a substance abuse problem

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## PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS: PREVENT DRUG ABUSE

### First Aid Tips

If you suspect someone has overdosed on prescription drugs and the victim is:

**Responsive,**  
call the Poison Control Center (800-222-1222). Tell them you suspect an overdose and provide information about what and how much was taken.

**Unresponsive,**  
call 911. Tell them the victim is unresponsive and whether he or she is breathing. Include that you suspect an overdose and answer all questions. Hang up the phone when the dispatcher tells you to. Return to the victim and provide CPR if the victim is unresponsive and not breathing.

**Get certified through NSC**  
NSC provides CPR & AED training through both classroom and online courses. Find a training location near you, or view a demonstration of NSC online training at [nsc.org/onlinelearning](http://nsc.org/onlinelearning).

### A Hidden Workplace Danger

Prescription painkiller abuse is a rising epidemic and can greatly impact the workplace. Employees may now be struggling with a problem they never intended to have. If you suspect a co-worker or employee is under the influence of prescription painkillers, common on-the-job behaviors that may indicate a problem include:

- Lack of attention or focus
- Poor decision-making
- Decreasing work quality
- Poor judgment
- Unusual carelessness
- Frequently misses work

Many of these signs and symptoms may come on gradually and can be difficult to spot. None of them is a definitive indicator that the person has a problem, but if there is suspicion, please contact Human Resources or your Employee Assistance Program to take appropriate action.

### Chronic Back Pain

Because so many addictions stem from a serious medical problem, prevention is important. Back injuries, for example, are some of the most common work-related injuries. Though most back injuries are treated successfully with anti-inflammatory medications, exercises, physical therapy and other methods, sometimes opioid painkillers are prescribed. They should usually only be used for less than seven days, as longer use increases your risk of long-term complications.

Being proactive in your daily routine can help sideline these injuries before they become serious and prevent the need for painkillers:

- **Pay attention to your form:** Maintaining good posture and practicing proper lifting techniques are key in ergonomic safety
- **Watch your weight:** Carrying extra pounds can cause an extra strain on your back
- **Put your cigarettes out:** Smokers are especially vulnerable to back pain due to nutrient restriction to the spinal discs

### Safe Use, Storage & Disposal of Prescription Drugs

If you or a family member receives a prescription for these types of drugs, take these steps to prevent drug misuse:

- Always follow the doctor recommended dosage
- Keep medications in their original container, up & away from the reach of children and pets
- Throw out leftover or expired drugs safely; visit [nsc.org/disposalresources](http://nsc.org/disposalresources) for more information

#### Green Cross Tip

Lower back pain is the fifth-most common reason for all physician visits in the U.S. Avoiding high heels and lightening up your wallet can help sideline pain.

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