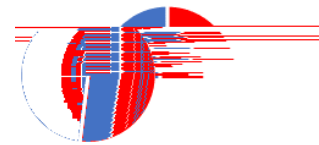


Consequences of Prescription Opioid Use

When opioid pain medications are used for short periods for acute pain, the risks are low. Long-term use of opioid medication for ongoing chronic pain carries much higher risks and offers fewer benefits.

- Until 2016, prescription opioids were involved in more deaths than heroin or illicit fentanyl. Now fentanyl is involved in the most deaths, followed by prescription opioids, then heroin.
- A majority of people who died as a result of an opioid overdose were diagnosed with chronic pain within a year of their death.
- Chronic pain and opioid addiction have always been connected.

Died by opioid
overdose



Risk of Misuse, Physical Dependence, and Illicit Opioid Use

- Even when opioids are taken as directed, physical dependence can result. Some patients can taper off their medications with minimal discomfort, but for others, serious difficulties begin.