**What are opioids?**

Opioids are a class of drugs that can be used to reduce pain. This includes prescription drugs that are legally prescribed by a doctor, such as Vicodin, Percocet, and OxyContin, as well as illicit opioids such as heroin.

**Who is at risk for addiction?**

There are several risk factors that increase the likelihood of developing an addiction, or substance use disorder, that parents should be aware of. These risk factors include starting at a young age, psychological factors, environmental influences (and genetics).

**Fast Facts**

- Children aged 0-5 years are most likely to be unintentionally exposed to opioids. Such exposures occur because opioids are stored within sight or stored inappropriately.
- Communicate the risks of prescription drug abuse to your kids. Children who learn a lot about the risks of drugs are up to 50% less likely to use drugs.
- 71.5% of teenagers who use prescription opioids take them for an unintended purpose.

**What can parents do?**

Be mindful of the number of opioid medications in your home, and keep them secured and out of children’s reach. Lock boxes are a great way to keep medications secure.

Dispose of unused medications in a Rx drop-off location. To find a drop-off location near you, visit in.gov/bitter/pill. Ask friends and family members to do the same.

Ask your provider questions such as: “What are the side effects of this medication?” or “When can I switch to acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil)?”

**Signs of Opioid Misuse**

- Depression and anxiety attacks
- Physical agitation
- Poor decision-making
- Mood swings
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Lowered motivation
- Financial hardship
- Loss of interest in hobbies
