

# Student Athletes and Prescription Medications



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## Parents of Student Athletes

A growing number of student athletes are becoming addicted to painkillers after being prescribed pain medication for a sports-related injury. Children may be unaware of the consequences or long-term health risks of misusing prescription medicines. Below are some tips, facts and signs of misuse to help you and your children navigate the situation.

### Here is what you can do:

- Educate yourself and your children about prescription drugs.
- Ask your physician about milder pain medication, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- If opioid painkillers are needed, ask your physician to prescribe the lowest effective dose and don't take the drugs longer than needed.
- Rest and let injuries heal; do not play through pain.
- Avoid unsupervised access to painkillers.
- Parents and coaches should monitor, store and dispose of painkillers properly, utilizing Rx drop-off locations.

### If you notice these signs, talk with your child's provider about alternative medications:

- Red, watery eyes, large or small pupils
- Runny nose or hacking cough
- Cold, sweaty palms, shaky hands
- Poor physical coordination
- Puffy or pale face
- Changes in mood, weight and grades
- Lack of energy for practices, games, school or team activities

### Fast Facts

- Common medicines that are prescribed: Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percocet, codeine, morphine, Demerol.
- By the time student-athletes are seniors in high school, about 11% have abused prescription painkillers.
- 80% of high school students misusing prescriptions got them from their physician.
- Studies have shown that taking acetaminophen and ibuprofen at the same time is safe and even provides greater pain relief.

For additional information on this topic, visit:

[TheRecoveryVillage.com](https://TheRecoveryVillage.com)

[N.gov/Health/Overdose-Prevention/](https://N.gov/Health/Overdose-Prevention/)

