

# Will you or a loved one soon have wisdom teeth removal surgery?

Important questions to ask your dentist about opioids.

## Opioids are drugs used to manage pain.

Common opioids include Vicodin® and Percocet®.

### 1 Do I need this medicine?

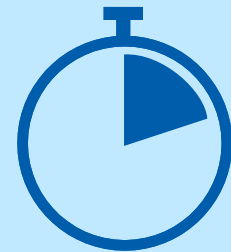
Ask your dentist if you need this medicine and, if so, to limit the number of pills and dosage. After a dental procedure like wisdom teeth removal, some people may need just 1 or 2 doses.

### 2 Are there alternatives that can help manage my pain?

Opioids are not the only option for treating pain. A combination of over-the-counter pain relievers (such as Tylenol® and Motrin®) can be just as effective, without the risk of addiction. Other options include long-acting anesthetics, along with the use of ice and rest to help minimize swelling.

### 3 What are the risks for addiction?

Everyone is at risk, especially young people, because opioids change the brain in ways that make chronic use more likely after just 3 days of use.<sup>2</sup> Misuse or dependence on opioids can lead to addiction to more powerful illicit drugs, so it is usually better to use the prescribed medication only as needed and follow all instructions provided by your health care professional.



**Every  
13 minutes,**  
someone dies from  
an opioid overdose.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4 Are there ways to minimize exposure?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has specific guidelines that recommend health care professionals prescribe the lowest dose for the shortest length of time possible. For acute pain, which includes discomfort from wisdom teeth removal, a 3-days supply or less is often all that is needed.

#### 5 How does this medicine mix with other medicines I'm taking?

Tell your dentist about any medications you are taking, as opioids can be deadly when mixed with other drugs, especially those that treat anxiety, sleeping disorders and seizures. Never mix alcohol with an opioid pain reliever.



86%

of heroin users started with an opioid prescription.<sup>3</sup>



**For support, please call the Substance Use Treatment Helpline at 1-855-780-5955 or go to [liveandworkwell.com/recovery](https://liveandworkwell.com/recovery).**

This confidential service is provided at no additional cost as part of your health benefit plan.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (<https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/>)

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction/news/20170316/opioid-dependencecan-start-in-just-a-few-days#2>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/relationship-between-prescriptiondrug-heroin-abuse/prescription-opioid-use-risk-factor-heroin-use>