High School Athletes and the Risks Associated with Opioid Use
Be Aware!
Ronnie’s Story

Source: The Medicine Abuse Project
Learning Outcomes

Understand the prescription opioid epidemic and its impact on adolescent athletes.

Understand how to work with schools, coaches, and doctors if your child needs prescription opioids.

Recognize the physical and behavioral changes associated with prescription opioid use and misuse.

Know how to properly store and dispose of prescription medications.
What are prescription opioids?

Narcotic pain medications that are prescribed for people with moderate to severe pain.
What are some commonly prescribed opioid medications?

- oxycodone – Oxycontin, Percodan, Percocet
- hydrocodone – Vicodin, Lortab, Lorcet
- diphenoxylate – Kadian, Avinza, MS Contin
- Codeine
- Fentanyl - Duragesic
- propoxyphene – Darvon
- hydromorphone – Dilaudid
- meperidine – Demerol
- methadone
How is this harmful?

From 1999 to 2015, over 183,000 people died from overdosing on prescription opioids.
How many people does this affect?

In the US, overdose deaths from any opioid have markedly increased since 2000.
Opioid Deaths are Increasing in Arizona.

Opioid death counts in AZ - 2007 to 2016

*Reproduced from Christ, Cara. Goal Council 3 Reducing Opioid Deaths Breakthrough Project Presentation. ADHS; 8/23/17
How common are prescription opioids?

In 2017, there were enough prescription opiate pain relievers dispensed to medicate every AZ adult around the clock for 1 week.*

*Christ, Cara. Goal Council 3 Reducing Opioid Deaths Breakthrough Project Presentation. ADHS; 8/23/17
How common are opioid prescriptions for adolescents?

Opioid medication prescriptions for adolescents nearly **doubled** from 1994 to 2007.*

1994: 6.4%

2007: 11.2%

How common is adolescent prescription misuse in AZ?

In 2016, almost 8% of 12th graders admitted to past year recreational use of opioids.

- 12th Grade: 7.8%
- 10th Grade: 6.8%
- 8th Grade: 5%

* Arizona Criminal Justice Youth Survey, 2016
How common is adolescent prescription misuse in AZ?

In 2016, almost 14% of 12th graders admitted to having ever misused prescription opioids.

*Arizona Criminal Justice Youth Use Survey, 2016*
I think it’s definitely a little more of an issue for athletes, especially athletes in contact sports where they are at a greater risk for injury, so I think there is definitely more prescribing happening and more prescribing and dispensing happening, but the risk is greater.

Former high school athlete
High School Sports Participation in the US

7,700,000 students participated in high school athletics in the 2012-2013 school year.*

*National Federation of State High School Association
How common are severe athletic injuries nationally?

20% of high school athletes who had an injury required a doctor's attention in 2013*

*National Federation of State High School Association
How frequently do injuries need surgery?

Sports-related injuries needing surgery increased 55% from 2006 to 2013.³
Why does an increase in surgeries matter?

Surgeries = Need for Rx pain medication
Risk Factors

Participants in high injury sports like football and wrestling have an increased risk of using opioids recreationally.\textsuperscript{4}
Risk Factors

If you play 3 or more sports, you are 3x more likely to be approached to illegally give or sell your opioid medications.⁵
People knew I took these medicines because I had torn my ACL, so they would ask me if I would sell them some, and I would tell them no, and I thought it was weird that they would ask me that.

- Former high school athlete
Risk Factors

Male athletes may be at greater risk than female athletes for both medical and recreational use of prescription opioids.
For me, soccer is my passion, so when you’re not playing, it sucks, and it’s hard to just sit on the bench while you’re injured.

Former high school athlete
My teammates were probably thinking about the second string center fielder and who was going to replace me. I think the coach was thinking that too. I just thought how soon can I heal and get back out there.
….I wanted to get back in playing not only for my team, but I know how much the down payment is for sports that your parents have to put on the table for uniforms and for the coach and stuff.

Former high school athlete
Take Home #1

Because high school athletes can experience injuries, they are more likely to be prescribed opioids.
Take Home #2

Pressure to get back in the game can lead to increased use of prescription opioids to manage pain.
Athletes are at greater risk to engage in recreational use of opioids because of the physical and emotional stresses of high-level competition and the injuries associated with it.
What can you do?

- Recognize Signs of Rx Misuse
- Education & Support
- Properly Store and Dispose Unused Opioid Medications
- Other Services
Learning Outcomes

- Understand the prescription opioid epidemic and its impact on adolescent athletes.
- Understand how to work with schools, coaches, and doctors if your child needs prescription opioids.
- Recognize the physical and behavioral changes associated with prescription opioid use and misuse.
- Know how to properly store and dispose of prescription medications.
### What can you do?

**Look for clues!**

#### Signs and Symptoms of Opioid Use

1. Most common physical sign is “pinpoint pupils”
2. Flushing (redness) of the face and neck
3. Fatigue, red, or glazed eyes
4. Slurred speech
5. Constipation

#### Signs and Symptoms of Opioid Withdrawal

1. Frequent yawning
2. Runny nose
3. Dilated pupils
4. Sudden trips to bathroom
5. Joint pain
6. Severe insomnia
What can you do?
Look for clues!

Pinpoint Pupils

Dilated Pupils

Recognize Signs of Rx Misuse
What can you do?
Look for clues!

Facial Flushing (Redness)
What can you do?
Look for clues!

Behavioral or Social Changes

- Drowsiness, lack of energy
- Isolation
- Problems at work
- Secrecy
- Irritability, mood swings
- Agitation/restlessness in morning
- Problems with Self Control

Recognize Signs of Rx Misuse
What can you do?
Look for clues!

Behavioral or Social Changes

- Self-esteem
- Concentration/motivation
- Interest in personal hygiene
- Dependability
What can you do?
Look for clues!

The 3 C’s of Substance Use

Loss of Control

Craving or preoccupation with use

Use despite negative Consequences
What can you do?

It’s up to YOU to talk openly with your kids!
What can you do?

What can you do?

Teach your kids the 4 R’s

**RESPECT** the power of medicine and use it properly.

**RECOGNIZE** that all medicines, especially prescription medications, have **RISKS** along with benefits.

Take **RESPONSIBILITY** for learning how to take prescription medicines safely and appropriately.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Learning Outcomes

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What can you do?

Parents, Coaches, and Athletes Must:

- Discuss how an injury will impact the student’s ability to play
- Create a Return to Play Plan
What can you do?

If your athlete is prescribed an opioid for pain, talk with his/her doctor about:

- whether you need prescription pain medicine
- an outline for a specific treatment plan
- the risks, side effects, and proper use of the medication
- when to end pain treatment
What can you do?

If your athlete is prescribed opioids for pain, talk with his/her doctor if he/she:

- has trouble weaning off medications
- has a history of substance misuse
- may need treatment
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Know how to properly store and dispose of prescription medications.
It was filled, and honestly, it is probably still in my cabinet somewhere.

I have them in the house because I’m still recovering from my shoulder injury. I’ve had Percocet for over two years, but I have weaned myself off of it about 10 months ago, but I do have it under lock and key.

Parent of former H.S. athlete
I might need them or somebody else might need them and they’re there, and the expiration date is still good on them, so I might as well keep them in case anything happens. Or, for somebody who doesn’t have insurance, they’re going to be paying $400 for a few pills or whatever, so if you have yours you can help them out.

Former high school athlete
What can you do?

1. Parent or Guardian **should administer** their child’s medications at all times.

2. Keep medication in a Secure Location.

3. School Nurse, health aid, or appropriate school staff should administer if medications needed at school.
What can you do?

- **DO NOT** sell or distribute medications!
- **DO NOT** throw prescribed medications in the trash
- **DO NOT** flush them down the toilet or pour down the drain
What can you do?

- Look for local **Take Back Events**
- Look for **Drop Boxes**
  www.dumpthedrugsaz.org
- Walgreens Safe Medication Disposal Program
Where else can you get help?

Arizona Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith, and Family Treatment Locator
http://substanceabuse.az.gov/

SAMHSA’s Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator
http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov
Where else can you get help?

Governor's Office of Youth, Faith, and Family
www.RethinkRxAbuse.org

The Surgeon’s General’s Call to End The Opioid Crisis
http://turnthetiderox.org/

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids
http://drugfree.org/

ADHS Opioid Epidemic webpage
www.azdhs.gov/opioids
Questions?

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References


