

# Health risks of drug addiction

**Long-term** consequences of drug use: gastrointestinal problems, including stomach ulcers, respiratory issues, such as chronic cough and possible respiratory illnesses and diseases like pneumonia, lose the sense of smell and suffer from chronic nosebleeds and/or a runny nose, contracting an infectious disease, collapsed veins, and cardiovascular issues like infections of the lining of the heart ([www.footprintstorecovery.com](http://www.footprintstorecovery.com)).

**Short-term** consequences of drug use: changes in appetite, sleeplessness or insomnia, increased heart rate, slurred speech, changes in cognitive ability, a temporary sense of euphoria, loss of coordination ([www.medicalnewstoday.com](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com)).

# Prescription opioid

A person can ***overdose*** on prescription opioids.

Use of prescription opioids ***during pregnancy*** can lead to miscarriage and low birth weight, and the baby could develop dependence ([www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)).

Repeated misuse of prescription opioids can lead to a ***substance use disorder*** (SUD), a medical illness which ranges from mild to severe and from temporary to chronic.

A range of ***treatments*** including medicines and behavioral therapies are effective in helping people with opioid addiction ([www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov)).

# Signs of dependency or addiction

An substance use disorder (SUD) develops when continued misuse of the drug changes the brain and ***causes health problems*** and failure to meet responsibilities at work, school, or home.

People addicted to an opioid medication who stop using the drug can have ***severe withdrawal symptoms*** that begin as early as a few hours after the drug was last taken.

These ***symptoms include*** muscle and bone pain, sleep problems, diarrhea and vomiting, cold flashes with goose bumps, uncontrollable leg movements, severe cravings.

# Safe use of opioids

The medicine must be taken exactly ***as prescribed*** - not take extra doses.

When ***educating adolescents*** on prescription opioids, the use of presentations, particularly personal stories, brief and engaging websites and videos, or serious games with realistic and relatable scenarios should be incorporated ([www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)).

All opioids should ***be stored*** in their original packaging inside a locked cabinet, lockbox, or a location where others cannot easily access them ([www.umassmed.edu](http://www.umassmed.edu)).

# Case of substance use emergency

***Intoxication*** from alcohol and illicit substances is a frequently cited reason for Emergency Department visits.

The Emergency Department is the proper place where an ***evaluation for substance*** use disorders and mental illness is warranted. ([www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au))

# Drug overdose symptoms

***Symptoms of a drug overdose*** or alcohol poisoning may include nausea and vomiting, chest pain, paranoia, hallucination, blue fingernails or lips, loss of consciousness, pale face, slow or erratic pulse.

When someone has an overdose, they need immediate medical attention. ***Call 112*** for ambulance/police in an emergency.

# Support a peer's recovery efforts

Just click on the links below to find more:

<https://castlecraig.co.uk/>

[Dependence in Romania](#)

[The Romanian Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition](#)

[Alcoholics Anonymous from Romania](#)

# Treatment providers in Romania

Just click on the links below to find more:

[Dependence in Romania](#)

[The Romanian Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition](#)

[Alcoholics Anonymous from Romania](#)