WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

BY DEFINITION
Naturally found in the opium poppy plant, opioids are a class of drug that chemically interacts with opioid receptors on the nerve cells in the body and brain. They produce a variety of effects, including relieving pain from things like dental surgery, sports injuries, or cancer.

BY NAME
Opioids can be prescription medications most known as "pain killers", or illicit drugs, such as heroin. The most commonly used opioids are:
- Prescriptions opioids such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet
- Synthetic opioids such as fentanyl (50/100x more potent than morphine)
- Heroin, an illicit drug

BY FUNCTION
Opioids produce a euphoria in addition to pain relief, while they tell the brain to block pain receptors and make you feel calm and happy also.
WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

By Misuse

When used for short periods of time as directed by your doctor, opioids can safely help control pain, but being effective at treating pain can also make them dangerous. When misused they can lead to tolerance (needing increased amounts for same effect), addiction, overdose incidents, and deaths.

By Effect

Short Term Effects:
- Feeling of calm, sleepiness, confusion
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Slowed/stopped breathing (can cause overdose)

Long Term Effects:
- Addiction
- Tolerance
- Dependence
- Heart and/or Lung Infection
- Muscle Pain

Injecting Effects
- Heart and/or Lung Infection
- HIV Infection
- Hepatitis B and/or C Infection

Sources:
NIDA.GOV, DRUGABUSE.GOV, MAYOCLINIC.ORG, HOPKINSMEDICINE.ORG

If Someone Needs Help

Go to samhsa.gov/find-help for a listing of treatment programs and resources. Remember, treatment is available and people can get better.