

# OPIOIDS



Opioids are medications that work on the opioid receptors in the brain to provide pain relief. While commonly prescribed for pain management, opioid overuse can cause chemical or psychological dependence and overdose.

**NURSING NOTE:** Taking opioids consistently can develop tolerance, physical dependence, and opioid use disorder. Patient education needs to include information on safe usage, tapering when required, and avoiding use of street medications and alcohol to avoid possible overdose and death.

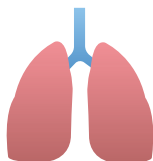
Type	Opioid Agonists	Pure Opioid Antagonist
Common Drugs	Morphine, Fentanyl, Hydromorphone Codeine, Oxycodone, Tapentadol	Naloxone
Method of Action	Activates the opioid receptors in the brain	<b>Blocks</b> opioid receptors
Effects	Analgesia, euphoria, sedation, respiratory depression, physical dependence, constipation	Reverses signs of opioid overdose
Nursing Notes	Assess clients for pain level prior to administration to reassess for effectiveness after administration.	Rapid reversal may produce agitation. The antagonistic effect wears off quickly, so monitoring for recurring signs of excessive opioids is essential.
Clinical Tip	Respiratory depression is more common with parenteral administration of opioids, in very young or older populations, and when clients' self-administration exceeds prescription.	Naloxone can be administered via nasal inhalation, IV, and IM. Each route of administration can vary in symptomatic relief.

## Signs of Opioid Overdose

Classic triad of signs:



Pinpoint pupils



Respiratory depression



Coma

**Treat with opioid antagonist**

## Opioid Withdrawal Symptoms



Fever



Insomnia



Lacrimation



Pupillary dilation



Anxiety



Tremors



GI upset

## NOTES

