

## FACING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC:

### 9 things to know.

- 1. Connecticut is in an opioid crisis.** Opioid-related overdose deaths in CT have grown at 4 times the national average since 2012.
- 2. Opioids dominate fatal drug overdoses.** Of the 917 drug overdose deaths in 2016, a significant number involved opioids.
- 3. The issue is not just prescription medications.** Drug overdose deaths involving heroin continued to climb, with 500+ fatal overdoses in 2016.
- 4. Misuse of Fentanyl.** Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid pain medication, is 50-100 times stronger than heroin. Mixing heroin and Fentanyl is causing a rapid rise in fatal overdoses.
- 5. Overdoses are more common in suburbs and rural areas than urban areas.** Although cities are centers of the problem, it goes way beyond urban areas.
- 6. White males are more likely to experience opioid overdose.** The epidemic affects us all. But of those who died of opioid overdose in 2016, the highest rate was among white, non-Hispanic males.
- 7. Most people who have problems with opioids are top income earners.** Statistics show 66% of people with a nonfatal opioid overdose have incomes in the top half of their communities.
- 8. Early intervention can reduce overdose deaths.** Naloxone (Narcan) is effective in stopping opioid-related overdoses.
- 9. It's a crisis that can be solved.** MAT (medication assisted therapy), for example, is just one form of treatment that can help people facing opioid addiction.

# CHANGE the SCRIPT

## CHANGE THE SCRIPT AND CHANGE LIFE FOR THE BETTER.

We need to agree that it's time to change the way we view illicit and prescription drug misuse and how we deal with it.

- **Talk to your doctor.** Have a conversation about prescription opioids.
- **Get informed.** Go online and learn what you can do to prevent opioid misuse in your community.
- **Go to [drugfreet.org](http://drugfreet.org)** for prevention, treatment, and recovery resources.

**For addiction treatment 24/7 call the Access Line  
1-800-563-4086**

(this includes detox and treatment for prescription opioids or heroin addiction)

To order this and other resources contact  
Connecticut Clearinghouse  
[www.ctclearinghouse.org](http://www.ctclearinghouse.org)  
1-800-232-4424



[www.ct.gov/dmhas](http://www.ct.gov/dmhas)

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# CHANGE the SCRIPT

**PREVENTION, TREATMENT,  
and RECOVERY RESOURCES  
for people facing DRUG  
MISUSE and ADDICTION**

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[drugfreet.org](http://drugfreet.org)

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# It's time to stop the cycle of drug misuse and addiction.

## LET'S CHANGE THE SCRIPT.

We all know that drugs such as opioids are destroying people's lives.

**Change the Script** aims to connect people who are affected by the crisis. Healthcare professionals. Treatment professionals. Friends and family. The public. By providing resources, **Change the Script** will help rewrite the story about how we deal with this issue.

### 3 KEY FACTS ABOUT OPIOIDS.

- 1. Knowledge is power.** The more you know about opioids, the better. Because you can do more for anyone who is struggling with them.
- 2. People in crisis need support.** People addicted to opioids have a serious medical condition that requires understanding.
- 3. Opioid misuse is a medical condition that requires medical solutions.** Talk to your doctor openly and honestly. He or she can help – with different approaches to managing pain, treatment options, and medical planning.

## PREVENTION

### You can stop opioid misuse and addiction before it starts.

The best way to treat opioid misuse is to prevent it from starting.

- Ask about **non-opioid approaches** to pain relief.
- **Never** change your dosage or stop medication without talking to your health care provider first.
- **Know the hazards of drug interactions**, including alcohol. A pharmacist can help if you have questions.
- **Never** use another patient's prescription.
- **Keep all prescription drugs – including opioids – safely and securely stored.** More than 50% of opioid misuse starts with excess pills being used by others who have access to them.
- **Safely dispose of prescription drugs** – locate the nearest public drop box or learn how to dispose of prescription drugs at home by going to [drugfreet.org](http://drugfreet.org)

## TREATMENT

### Effective methods are available.

- **Medication Assisted Treatment** combines medication with counseling for a “whole patient” approach.
- **Extended-release medications** stop the need for daily dosing and improve treatment.
- **“Pain” can be emotional.** Or it can be a sign of a mental health condition. Many people who misuse opioids suffer from depression or other mental health problems that can be treated.
- **Medication Tapering involves working with your doctor.** The goal is to decrease your dosage over a period of time.

## RECOVERY

### Get the support you need.

- **Join with others who are facing the same situation.** 12-step programs such as Narcotics Anonymous can help.
- **Build a support system.** Ask for help from people you can trust.
- **Avoid high-risk situations.** Avoid people you know who misuse opioids and other drugs. Set boundaries around your recovery and enforce them.
- **Have strategies for avoiding a return to use.** Know the signs. Have someone to call. Know how to distract yourself for 15-30 minutes. Learn how to relax. Do your recovery in small chunks of time. Access resources online.
- **Learn about CT's recovery system at [drugfreet.org](http://drugfreet.org).** Find links to treatment centers as well as recovery resources such as CCAR – the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery.