

OxyContin:

THE FACTS

What is OxyContin, Oxy, OC?

- **OxyContin is a drug prescribed by physicians for moderate to severe pain.** While prescription drugs may be helpful if they are used properly, taking OxyContin without a doctor's approval and supervision can be highly addictive and dangerous.
- **Although OxyContin is a prescription drug, it *is* a narcotic (opiate) like heroin.** People who get addicted to OxyContin often switch to heroin.

"After I started smoking weed, it went downhill real quick. I started doing prescription drugs including OxyContin. I would come home from school sweating and shaking. I needed drugs just to keep from feeling sick."
- Recovering addict, age 17

What can happen to me if I misuse or abuse OxyContin?

Misusing or abusing OxyContin can:

- **Cause changes in your breathing, making it dangerously slow.**
- **Lead to physical dependence.** This means that the body adapts to the presence of the drug and withdrawal symptoms occur if regular use is reduced abruptly.
- **Produce severe withdrawal symptoms** including restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes with goose bumps, and involuntary leg movements.
- **Lead to OxyContin and heroin addiction.**

The choices you make today may hurt your family and friends and jeopardize your school activities, your plans for college, and even your freedom.

Always remember these skills to give you the strength to confidently choose not to use drugs or alcohol:

- **THINK** through every situation and then make the best possible decision.
- **CLARIFY** the decision to be made or the problem to be solved.
- **CONSIDER** the alternatives and the likely outcome of your selection.
- **CHOOSE** the best alternative and take action.
- **ANTICIPATE** how you will react to risky situations.
- **STAY AWAY** from situations that you know may be risky.
- **WALK AWAY** from risky or dangerous situations.

Remember, you are in control of your future!

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OxyContin:

THE FACTS (continued)

Are there legal penalties for misusing OxyContin or other prescription drugs?

Misusing OxyContin and other prescription drugs can land you in jail. Taking any prescription drug that is not prescribed to you or using it in a manner not prescribed by a doctor is against the law. For example:

- If prescription drugs that are not prescribed to you are found in your school locker or in your car, ***you can be charged with possession of the drugs.***
- If you give one of your prescription pills to a friend at school, you could be found guilty of distribution of a controlled substance on school grounds. ***You could face jail time!***
- If you sell prescription drugs to another student on school grounds, you could be found guilty of selling a controlled substance on school grounds. ***You would have to serve a mandatory two-year sentence and pay a fine of \$1,000 or more!***

"When I started taking OxyContin, with the snap of a finger I was addicted. My whole life changed. To support my habit, I sold drugs. I was arrested. Today I'm facing 20 years in jail for conspiracy to obtain and distribute OxyContin."

- Recovering addict, age 19

How can I learn more?

- Visit the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health website at www.state.ma.us/dph/bsas, then scroll to: Publications or call 1-617-624-5111 to ask for pamphlets.
- Visit the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse, The Medical Foundation at maclearinghouse.com or call 1-800-952-6637.

WHAT TO DO TO GET CONFIDENTIAL HELP:

If you are worried about yourself, a friend, or a family member who might be misusing or abusing OxyContin, alcohol, or other drugs, call the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline at 1-800-327-5050. Confidential help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Sources: www.freevibe.com/Drug_Facts/prescription_drugs.asp (January 4, 2006)

Botvin, Gilbert J., Life Skills Training, Promoting Health and Personal Development, Level 2 Teacher's Manual, Princeton, NJ, 1997

Office of Essex District Attorney, Jonathan W. Blodgett, "Choose to Refuse," Salem, MA, 2005

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