

INSPIRED

To Make Healthy Choices

The latest news about the opioid crisis underlies the need for continual focus on prevention of use and abuse of drugs.

According to the 2017 Georgia Student Health Survey (GSHS 2.0), Gwinnett high school students report low use of heroin, painkillers and others prescription drugs. Results of the “30 day use” questions indicate **0% use of heroin** and **minimal use of drugs without doctor prescription of painkillers** (1.65%), **tranquilizers** (1.28%), **stimulants** (1%) or **any other type of prescription drug** (2.2%).

Though the usage of these drugs is low, **opioids**, medications that relieve pain, **are very addictive**. It’s important to be aware that our youth and adults are often given these following routine surgeries such as pulling of wisdom teeth or knee surgeries.

Some strategies to lessen risks for addiction and/or overdose are to always:

- **Take medication only as directed**, minimizing dosage and duration of opioid use
- **Talk to your doctor when your pain is not under control**
- **Avoid using alcohol** while taking opioids
- **Follow your doctor's instructions** about other drugs not to take while using opioids
- **Store drugs safely**, away from children and locked up
- **Dispose of unused drugs**, ideally through a take-back program
- **Avoid sharing your medication** with other people

Signs of an overdose include:

- slow or shallow breathing
- blue or gray lips and fingernails
- pale and/or moist skin
- unable to wake up or respond

Although most overdoses occur in the presence of others, fear of arrest and prosecution prevents many people from calling 911.

Georgia’s Medical Amnesty Law protects victims and callers seeking medical assistance at drug or alcohol overdose scenes.

The law provides protection for **people who call 911** and seek medical assistance for someone experiencing a drug or alcohol-related overdose. **The caller and the victim cannot be arrested, charged or prosecuted for small amounts of drugs, alcohol or drug paraphernalia** if the evidence was obtained as a result of seeking medical assistance.

The law also increases access to the opioid overdose “antidote” naloxone, also called Narcan. **Physicians may prescribe naloxone to a family member, friend or other person in a position to assist someone at risk of opioid overdose, and to first responders, harm reduction organizations and pain management clinics.** Pharmacists are permitted to dispense naloxone under that prescription. **The physician, pharmacist and person administering naloxone are immune from civil, criminal and professional liability** as long as they act in good faith and in compliance with the applicable standard of care. The timely administration of naloxone typically reverses the effects of opiates such as heroin and opioids like hydrocodone, oxycodone, methadone and others. Victims of opioid overdose who receive naloxone in time are less likely to die or suffer long-term brain or tissue damage.

If you, your child or someone you know has been prescribed any of the opioids, BE AWARE of their addictive potential and propensity for abuse.

See an overdose?
Don't run, call 911.

Naloxone reverses the effects of opioids.

Most youth and young adults do NOT use alcohol and illegal drugs.

Need help? Go to www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

For more information:
Opioids & Georgia 911 Medical Amnesty Law
www.guideinc.org

