

2022

HEALTHCARE *Profiles*



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Prescription opioids: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Prescription opioids are medications used for treating acute pain due to surgery, serious injury or illness. When used correctly, opioids can effectively control severe types of pain. However, they're also powerfully addictive and taking them can lead to fatal overdoses. With the United States in the midst of an opioid crisis, it's important to understand how these painkillers work and what to do to prevent overdosing and addiction.

ABOUT OPIOIDS

Opioid drugs are chemically similar to endorphins, which block pain by binding to receptors in your nervous system. Opioids imitate endorphins but cause a much stronger pain-blocking signal. Commonly prescribed opioid drugs include morphine, oxycodone and fentanyl.

When taking these drugs, over time your brain starts to crave the high caused by the release of dopamine following a dose of opioids, which can lead to addiction. What's more, since opioid receptors regulate your breathing, abusing opioid drugs can cause

you to stop breathing altogether, possibly resulting in death.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

If you're prescribed an opioid, you should take the following precautions:

- Discuss possible risks and alternate treatments with your doctor
- Take the medication exactly as prescribed, at the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time possible

- Avoid giving your prescription drugs to others and store them away from children, adolescents and individuals with a history of substance abuse
- Never mix opioids with alcohol
- Dispose of leftover pills through a prescription take-back program

If you or someone you know experiences extreme drowsiness, slowed breathing or disorientation while taking opioids, call 911 immediately.



Are you protecting YOUR HEARING?



It may seem overly cautious to always turn down your music or wear earplugs to concerts, but failing to protect your hearing can have serious consequences for your mental and physical well-being.

Untreated hearing loss can take a toll on job performance and personal relationships and may lead to experiencing shame, isolation and low self-esteem. It also makes you less alert to dangers around you and impairs your ability to

remember and learn new tasks. What's more, hearing loss has been linked to serious conditions like depression and dementia.

In most cases, hearing loss happens gradually, so make sure to have your hearing checked by a health professional about once a year. Keep in mind that while most hearing loss is age related, excessive noise exposure can permanently damage your hearing at any age.

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Three tips to make living with **ARTHRITIS EASIER**

Arthritis can make it difficult to perform a variety of tasks, from getting dressed in the morning to washing dishes at night. Here are three ways you can improve your quality of life if you have arthritis.

1. KEEP MOVING.

Regular exercise is essential for maintaining joint function and bone density and can help relieve arthritis symptoms. Plus, exercise promotes better sleep and helps with weight management.

2. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET.

Eating an anti-inflammatory diet — which involves replacing sugary, refined foods with fruits, vegetables, fish, lean meats and whole grains rich in antioxidants — has been shown to help reduce arthritic pain caused by joint inflammation. If you're overweight, a low-calorie diet is essential for shedding pounds; weight loss can reduce pressure on your joints.

3. MAKE YOUR HOME ACCESSIBLE.

Small adjustments made to your home

— such as using a shower stool or keeping items on lower shelves — can ease pain and stress. Look for ergonomic equipment and assistive devices that can be used at home to improve your grip and avoid unnecessary bending or reaching.

Finally, ask for help from family members and friends if you need it and continue to meet with your doctor regularly to address ongoing health concerns.



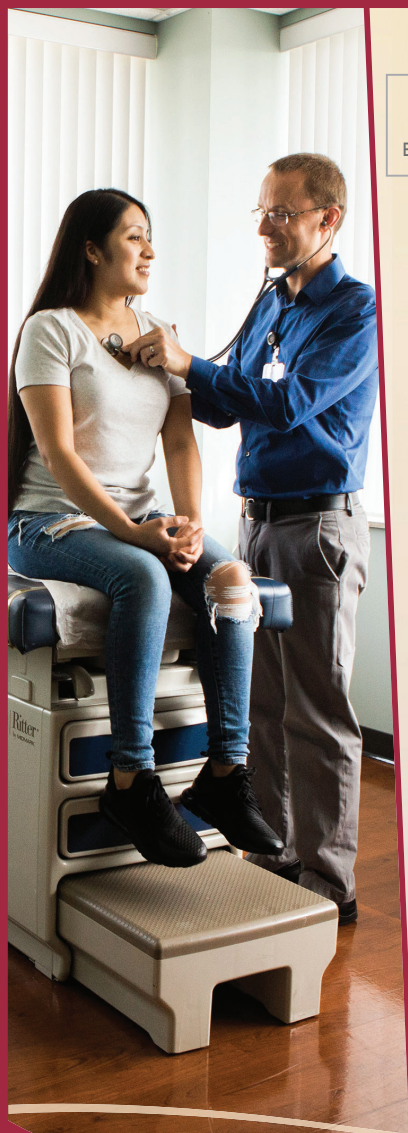
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Overview of the MAIN TYPES OF DIABETES

Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, enables the glucose circulating in the blood to reach the various cells in the body. Diabetic people produce too little or no insulin, or their bodies don't react to insulin normally. Here's more information about the three main types of diabetes.

TYPE 1

Occurring between infancy and early adulthood,

TYPE 2

This form of diabetes, occurring primarily in



adulthood, is increasing in frequency and accounts for about 90 per cent of diabetic cases. People with type 2 diabetes either produce insufficient insulin, or their bodies don't use it effectively. As sugar levels rise in the blood, lifestyle modifications related to diet and exercise can help, and medical treatments may be prescribed.

GESTATIONAL

Gestational diabetes affects some women and babies during the second or third trimester of pregnancy. Essentially symptomless, this form of diabetes usually disappears after childbirth but may increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

Consult your doctor or pharmacist for more information and advice on your condition.



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What's FARMER'S LUNG?



Farmer's lung is a potentially serious allergic disease that mainly affects farmers. Here's what you need to know.

CAUSES

Farmer's lung is a disease that's usually caused by breathing in dust from moldy hay that contains harmful spores and bacteria. However, dust from any moldy crop, including straw, grain and tobacco, can cause the disease.

A recent study showed that exposure to organochlorines and carbamate pesticides may also be

risk factors for farmer's lung.

Along with farmers, anyone who handles hay or grain in large quantities is at risk for developing farmer's lung. For example, zookeepers, poultry workers, stable workers and pet store workers can also develop the condition.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of farmer's lung range from very mild to more serious depending on the person's sensitivity to mold and the amount of mold inhaled. Symptoms include:

- Dry cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Muscle pain
- Rapid heart rate
- Significant weight loss
- Severe fatigue

The symptoms of farmer's lung can last up to 12 weeks but may ease after 12 hours. However, because many of these symptoms are associated with other minor illnesses, like the common cold, many people with farmer's lung don't know they have it.

TREATMENT

If you have an acute episode of farmer's lung, avoid contact with dust as much as possible. In severe cases, you may need to receive oxygen. Your doctor may also prescribe medication to relieve your symptoms and make it easier for you to breathe. However, there's no cure for farmer's lung, and you may experience hypersensitivity to moldy dust for the rest of your life.

If you think you have farmer's lung, contact a health care professional immediately.

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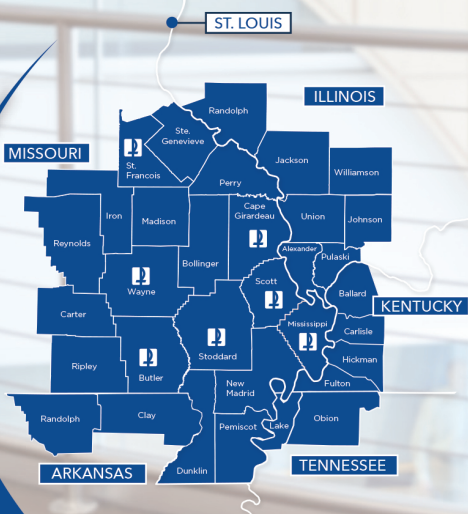


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