

Opioids and Depression



Overview

We know pain and depression are linked. If you're in pain, you can become depressed about it. But did you know depression is also linked to certain pain medications? Let's take a few minutes to learn about this connection.

Raising the risk

Opioids are powerful painkillers prescribed by a doctor. They affect your brain. Studies show that taking them for longer than a month may increase your risk for depression. The longer you take an opioid, the higher the risk. This can even happen to people who have no history of depression, and who take opioids as directed. Some people also have depression when they stop taking an opioid, as the brain adjusts to the lack of the drug.

Signs of depression

What are some signs of depression? You may feel sad, lonely or empty. You may feel anxious or irritable, and you may get angry about little things. Your sleep schedule and appetite may change. It may be hard for you to concentrate and to think clearly. You may lose interest in things you used to like. You may feel hopeless, and have thoughts of death.

Conclusion

If you use an opioid and notice signs of depression, take it seriously. Tell your doctor right away. Depression can get better with treatment. Your doctor will create a care plan that's right for you.

