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 **Healthyroads**™

01

Wellness and Healthy Living **Opioids: What You Need to Know**

Some painkillers, such as prescription opioids, are very strong. If you have pain that over-the-counter medicine isn't helping, you might think "strong" sounds good. But stronger doesn't always mean better. In fact, sometimes opioids are more harmful than helpful. Before you try them, be sure you know how to use them safely and what the risks are. It's also wise to know what other options you have for managing pain.

Opioids work by slowing down nerve signals. They also change the brain's reaction to the pain signals. This results in less pain and calms the emotional response to pain. Opioids can help in managing severe pain after surgery or a serious injury.

Opioids can be helpful for treating acute pain. That's the kind of intense but short-term pain you might have after a serious injury. But keep in mind that using them to treat long-term pain can lead to a number of risks.

One risk is that you may need stronger and stronger doses to get the same effect. And in time your body may start to have a hard time functioning normally without them. Then there's the chance that you may start to crave the pleasant feeling that opioids bring. Those cravings can be an early sign of addiction. Another serious risk is that you might take an overdose, or have a dangerous interaction between the opioid and another medicine that you take.

So, what are some ways to manage pain without opioids?

- * **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).** Aspirin and ibuprofen are common types of over-the-counter NSAIDs. Stronger NSAIDs need a doctor's prescription.
- * **Acetaminophen.** Tylenol® is the best-known brand name of this medicine.
- * **Topical analgesics.** These are pain medicines that are applied to the skin in the form of a cream, lotion, or a patch.
- * **Manual therapies.** These can include physical therapy, chiropractic, and massage.
- * **Lifestyle changes.** Better sleep, a healthy diet, exercise, and support groups may help ease pain.

Keep in mind that long-term use of any pain medicine can be harmful to your health. These include over-the-counter medicines, such as those discussed above. If you are having trouble coping with pain, talk with your doctor about the best options for you. If your care plan involves taking medicine, be sure to discuss its known risks and side effects and how to take it safely.

Welcome to
HEALTHYROADS!

In this monthly newsletter, you'll find a collection of articles on popular health and wellness topics. If you'd like additional support in your quest to lose weight, improve nutrition, develop an exercise plan, reduce stress, or quit smoking, visit us online at www.healthyroads.com.

There you can find a collection of tools to help you reach your health goals.

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02

Nutrition and Weight Management The No-More-Diets Diet

Going on a diet is a New Year's tradition for many people. Unfortunately, "diet" often means a short-term, extreme plan designed for quick weight loss. From fasts to diets that ban entire food groups, there is no shortage of wild plans.

Unfortunately, such plans tend to be unhealthy. They can leave you feeling tired, cranky, and very hungry. And most of them won't help you reach and maintain your goal weight, at least not in the long run. Why go through misery without the payoff?

There is a better way to lose weight. Better because it's not only healthier but more enjoyable. And better because the weight you lose is more likely to stay off.

Here's how:

- * **Make healthy choices most of the time.** Managing your weight doesn't have to mean working out every day and resisting every treat you meet. But do try to move your body when you can, even if it's a 5-minute walk to the water cooler. And when you eat, emphasize whole, nutrient-dense foods like fresh fruits and veggies, lean protein, and whole grains.
- * **Embrace the big picture.** Try not to obsess over numbers, like calories and weight. Instead, loosen up and focus on the end goal: a healthy weight and the benefits that come with it. Numbers are not always a sure path to weight loss. Making healthy choices at least most of the time is the key.

- * **Be mindful at mealtimes.** Avoid distractions like TV and phones. Tune in to why you're eating. Note how hungry you are, and let that hunger guide your eating. How is your hunger changing as you eat? Try to detect when you are no longer hungry. Also, pay attention to—and savor—the experience of eating. Put your fork down and enjoy the tastes, the textures, the smells, and the sights. When your body says you've had enough, listen to it. Stop eating, place your napkin on top of your dishes, and push them away.

- * **Acknowledge your limits.** Be aware of your triggers. For example, if moderation just doesn't seem possible when you eat bread or french fries, then you might have to avoid those foods—at least until you're sure you feel more in control when they're around. If your commitment to healthy choices is weaker when your stress is up, learn some calming techniques. If your cravings for junk food spike every time you miss sleep, make it a priority to get enough sleep and keep yourself rested.

This year, resolve to stack the odds in favor of healthy choices, and you'll stack the odds in favor of healthy, long-term weight loss.



COACH TIP:

Let your body's hunger cues help you decide when to stop eating. Try to detect when you have had enough food. Then, stop eating and turn your attention to other activities for a while.



03

SERIOUS ABOUT QUITTING?

We at Healthyroads understand the challenges of quitting smoking. That's why we offer a variety of online tools and articles to help you quit—once and for all. Our web-based tools give you every chance to succeed. For anyone considering quitting smoking, take the first step and visit www.healthyroads.com.



Active Living Fitter in 2017: Your 12-Week Plan

In this first of a 3-part series, we'll look at how to start a basic routine that includes cardio, strength, and core training.

Start your new year right with a plan to get fitter. If you aren't already active, or haven't been active in a while, walking is a great place to start. And having a plan can help keep you on track and motivated.

Brisk walking is a type of aerobic exercise. That means it makes your lungs and heart work harder and it improves your circulation. This type of exercise can help lower your risk for heart disease, diabetes, and stroke; keep your weight, cholesterol levels, and blood pressure in check; and relieve stress.

Brisk walking is simple and it's safe for most people. Getting started is easy. At the end of this article, you'll find a table that lays out the first 4 weeks of a workout program featuring walking. This is the first part of a

12-week plan, based on a program developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. This table also covers how to incorporate strength and core training into your workout routine. In February and March, you will build on this plan.

The plan starts slowly and helps you build little by little. At the end of the 12-week program, you will have a complete workout schedule that meets the recommended exercise guidelines. Note that you can adapt this schedule for any aerobic activity. If you prefer to swim, jog, or ride your bike in place of walking, that's fine, too. Before you start, just make sure to talk with your doctor. If you're not sure how to do the strength and core exercises, check with a physical therapist or certified personal trainer.

SAMPLE WORKOUT PROGRAM: WEEKS 1 - 4

	Type of Training	Warmup	Workout	Cooldown & Stretch
WEEK 1	Aerobic (5 days)	5 minutes	Brisk walk: 5 minutes	5 minutes
	Strength & Core (2 days)	5 minutes	Sit to stand from chair; wall push-ups; bridges (3 x 10)	5 minutes
WEEK 2	Aerobic (5 days)	5 minutes	Brisk walk: 7 minutes	5 minutes
	Strength & Core (2 days)	5 minutes	Sit to stand from chair; wall push-ups; bridges (3 x 10)	5 minutes
WEEK 3	Aerobic (5 days)	5 minutes	Brisk walk: 9 minutes	5 minutes
	Strength & Core (2 days)	5 minutes	Sit to stand from chair; wall push-ups; bridges (3 x 10)	5 minutes
WEEK 4	Aerobic (5 days)	5 minutes	Brisk walk: 11 minutes	5 minutes
	Strength & Core (2 days)	5 minutes	Sit to stand from chair; wall push-ups; bridges (3 x 10)	5 minutes



Life Skills

How to Make New Friends

Good friends are vital to health and happiness. People with a strong circle of friends tend to live longer and be happier and more satisfied with their lives. They also tend to have fewer health problems. But it's not always easy to make and maintain friendships. If your circle has shrunk, here are some basic tips to help you make new friends.

The first step to meeting new people is to get out to places where people mingle. To boost your odds of making friends, choose nearby options where the same people gather repeatedly to do or talk about things that interest you. Here are some ideas:

- * **Take a class** at the local college, gym, senior center, yoga studio, or dance hall.
- * **Join a club.** It could be a book club, hiking club, Toastmasters, or birding club.
- * **Join a recreational sports team.** Or cheer on your favorite team at a local spot.
- * **Volunteer** for a cause or organization you believe in.
- * **Join a spiritual community.** Go to church, temple, or a meditation center.
- * **Get out in the neighborhood.** Join a community garden. Take Fido to the park.

The next step is to break the ice and get to know someone better. Try these strategies:

- * **Smile and use people's names.** Smiling is one of the best ways to break the ice. And once you learn a name, use it. People love to hear their own names.
- * **Show genuine interest and appreciation.** Break the ice with a simple question or sincere compliment. Continue the conversation with open-ended questions.
- * **Make and accept invitations.** Invite a new acquaintance to do something low-key, like take a walk or grab coffee or a bite. Say yes when people invite you.
- * **Offer a little of yourself.** To deepen beyond the acquaintance stage, open up a bit. Share a little of yourself personally or emotionally. See if they reciprocate.

Like all worthwhile ventures, making new friends can take time and persistence. So cast your net wide. And don't be discouraged if your first attempt doesn't work. People are busy. Suggest plans again if the other person seems interested. And remember, everyone's social circle shrinks from time to time. Lots of people want to make friends.

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