



## A Guide to Youth Injury & Pain Management

More than 3.5 million youth sports injuries occur each year, often causing missed play time.

### Opioid Risks

- Affect the brain like heroin
- Mask pain without treating injury
- Highly addictive, even short-term
- Can slow or stop breathing
- Risky when mixed with other substances
- Impaired driving



### Signs of Unprescribed Use

- Small pupils
- Slurred speech
- Redness
- Withdrawal
- Constipation

### ATHLETES

If prescribed an opioid for pain, work with your parents and doctor to create a safe treatment plan.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- Male athletes are twice as likely to be prescribed painkillers and four times as likely to misuse them.
- 28% to 46% of high school athletes have used opioids. Participating in ≥1 high school sport puts adolescents at 30% greater odds of future opioid use disorder.
- 1 in 3 young athletes miss practices or games due to injury.

### BE IN THE KNOW

- Talk with your parents, coaches, trainers, and doctors.
- Understand your treatment plan.
- Rest and fully recover before returning to play.

### COACHES

Your support is key in reducing Opioid-related risks among athletes.



### AVOID PRESSURING

Encourage rest and recovery—avoid pressure to return too soon.

### FOSTER DIALOGUE

Promote open communication with parents, teachers, and the athlete.

### BE AWARE

Learn signs of opioid use and misuse.

### You are your athlete's best advocate

A coach's job doesn't end when the game is over. Coaches often act as mentors and trusted adults. Share this information with parents soon after an injury, before the athlete sees a doctor.

### PARENTS

In 2024, 395,000 adolescents used opioids outside of medical guidance—mostly prescription medications.



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### A SAFE PLAN FOR HOME

Parents can help create a safe, effective plan by deciding who will manage, monitor and have access to your student athlete's prescription.

1 2 3 4

**COUNT IT**  
Track and secure prescription medications.



**LOCK IT**  
Use a lock bag. Scan QR code for a free one.



**DROP IT**  
Dispose of unused meds at 24/7 police drop boxes.

### R.I.C.E. & Non-Medication Options

Opioids can be part of a plan, but know the risks and alternatives.



#### Recommended Alternative Treatment Options

- Exercise
- Acupuncture
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Massage
- Ice Therapy
- Chiropractic Care
- Ibuprofen or Acetaminofen

Use **Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation** to manage many injuries. Other non-medication treatments may help.

The Mayor's Coalition on Behavioral Health is not suggesting that prescribed opioids can't be an effective component of pain management; we simply encourage you to educate yourself on the risks, expectations, and available alternatives.

Naloxone can reverse an overdose. Scan QR code for free naloxone.



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Disclaimer: This guide is for informational purposes only and should not be considered medical advice. Always consult with a healthcare professional for any questions about opioid use.