

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Help Fight the Heroin and Opioid Epidemic**

*Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness week*

**Eau Claire, WI - September 19, 2019** – Prescription drugs serve an important purpose when used properly under a doctor’s care. At one point or another, we’ve all used prescription drugs or over the counter (OTC) medicines to alleviate an illness – whether it’s to relieve pain or curb a cough. **However, the misuse of prescription painkillers (such as opioids) has increased steadily over the past decade putting many lives at risk.**

Anyone who takes prescription opioids can become addicted. Addiction doesn’t discriminate. Misuse of prescription opioids may lead to heroin use (*4 out of 5 heroin addicts start with prescription painkillers*). Both prescription opioids and heroin can cause addiction, overdose or even death. In 2018, Wisconsin had 839 opioid-related deaths, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

**Anyone who takes prescription opioids can become addicted.**

Common prescription opioids include:

- Codeine
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin®)
- Oxycodone (Percocet®)
- Methadone

Ask your doctor about other options for pain management.

**Here are ways that you can help prevent prescription misuse:**

- **Safe storage.** Store prescription medication in a locked location that is out of sight.
- **Safe disposal.** Dispose of unused or expired medication at a permanent drop boxes in Eau Claire County (<https://bit.ly/RXDropBox>) during the National Drug Take Back event (October 26<sup>th</sup> at the Altoona Police Department or Marshfield Clinic on Craig Road).
- **Safe disposal at home.** Use an environmentally safe option to deactivate medication in the convenience of your home. Contact the Health Department at 715-839-4718 for information on how to receive a free drug deactivation system.
- **Safe use.** Don’t share your prescription painkillers or other medications with anyone. Take medication only as prescribed, and always double check the label to make sure it’s the correct medication.



**LOCK THEM UP.**  
SAFELY STORE AND DISPOSE OF  
PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS.



**DOSE OF REALITY**  
PREVENT PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLER ABUSE.

**LEARN HOW**

Learn more about preventing prescription misuse. Visit: [www.getinvolvedasap.org](http://www.getinvolvedasap.org) or [www.doseofreality.org](http://www.doseofreality.org).

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